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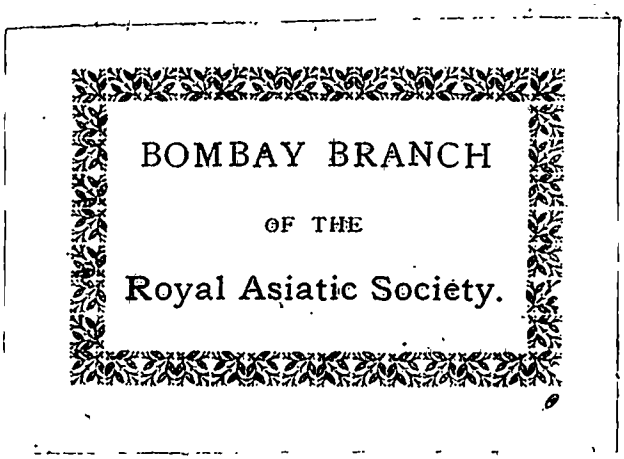

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HISTORICAL & LITERARY

MEMOIRS AND ANECDOTES,

SELECTED FROM THE

CORRESPONDENCE

OF

BARON DE GRIMM

AND

DIDEROT

WITH

THE DUKE OF SAXE-GOTHA,

AND MANY OTHER DISTINGUISHED PERSONS,

BETWEEN THE YEARS 1753 AND 1790.

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TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

Second Edition.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THE name of Baron de Grimm is one which has long been familiar to all persons who have interested themselves in the state of French literature for the last half Century. He was intimately connected with all the *beaux-esprits* of Paris during the latter years of the French Monarchy, and was distinguished among them for the variety of his talents and knowledge.

His Literary Correspondence with the Duke of Saxe-Gotha was fortunately recovered by M. Bancet, a man of letters in France, the author of various productions which evince talents and taste. The Correspondence from the beginning of 1753 to the end of 1790 was published at Paris, in sixteen volumes, from which a selection has been made and re-published in England, in the original language, in seven volumes; and from these seven the En-

glish version has been carefully selected and translated. This whole period, including nearly forty years, is replete with public events of the highest importance, and was concluded by one of the most extraordinary revolutions that the world ever witnessed.

We are informed, by the French Editor, that the Baron de Grimm is not the sole author of the original papers. The Abbé Raynal was the first person who engaged in carrying on a literary correspondence with some of the sovereigns of Europe, that is to say the Empress of Russia, the Queen of Sweden, the King of Poland, the Duchess of Saxe-Gotha, the Duke of Deux-Ponts, the hereditary Princess of Hesse-Darmstadt, Prince George of Hesse-Darmstadt, and the Princess of Nassau-Saarbruch. In 1755 the Abbé resigned the pen to the Baron de Grimm who continued it to 1790, associating in his labours many of the most distinguished writers of that period.

This Correspondence embraces at once the manners, the laws, the philosophy, the arts, and the literature of the times, and presents a most pleasing variety in the manner of treating the several subjects. It makes us acquainted with a period concerning which but few authentic docume. ts

remain to us. At this epoch Montesquieu, Buffon, Fontenelle, Rousseau, and Voltaire, were still alive, and the most celebrated writers of the eighteenth century published several of the works on which their reputation and glory are principally established. The greater part of these are analysed in the Correspondence of the Baron de Grimm, with a judgment and an impartiality which will perhaps astonish the readers of the present day. We find also observations upon the manners, the laws, and the philosophy of the times which appear well adapted to throwing light upon the spirit of the eighteenth century, and are therefore most valuable documents towards compiling the history of a period, when the great events we have recently witnessed were preparing in silence, and at the utter unconsciousness of their cotemporaries. But what must above all things surprise, and excite the curiosity of the reader, in this Correspondence, is the freedom with which the author writes on all subjects. The Baron de Grimm and the literati associated with him, had no thoughts of enlightening the public; they were not restrained by the complaisance of friendship, nor by the fear of wounding the *amour-propre* of those whose works they analysed; they delivered their opinions on all subjects with the

greater freedom, since they were not afraid of offending any one. We find that total absence of consideration or management with regard to the feelings of others, which can never exist in a work written expressly for publication. In one word, this Correspondence is so much the more deserving of a favourable reception, from the public, as it was never intended for them, and as it offers many curious details in various ways upon a very interesting period. These considerations have occasioned some enlightened critics already to rank the work among the most important *Historical and Literary Memoirs and Anecdotes* possessed by any country.

BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIRS

OF THE

BARON DE GRIMM.

Frederick Melchoir Grimm was born at Ratisbon, on the twenty-sixth of December, 1723. His parents were poor and in an obscure station of life, but they gave him a respectable education. This he contrived to turn to so good an account, that with no other fortune he raised himself to a certain rank and distinction in society.

M. de Grimm commenced his career in Germany nearly like Cottin in France, but finished much better. His first works were hissed without mercy. He wrote a tragedy called *Banise,* which Lessing and other critics turned into the most complete ridicule. Not discouraged by these checks, his talents soon opened to him the road to fame and fortune. He accompanied the children of Count de Schomberg to Paris, where he applied himself assiduously to learning and study, and was reader to the Duke of Saxe-Gotha when Jean-Jacques Rousseau first sought his acquaintance. He afterwards became connected with the Count de F.... *, who conceived an extraordinary friendship for him.

* From Marmontel's Memoirs it appears that this was the young Count de Frise, nephew to Marshal Saxe, and that Grimm was his secretary.—TRANSLATOR.

What first attracted Rousseau towards M. de Grimm was the decided passion of the latter for music; the harpsichord was a constant motive for bringing them together, and that of Grimm served for both the friends. As Grimm was a foreigner he was very desirous of making acquaintance at Paris, and Rousseau introduced him to Diderot, to the Baron d'Holbach, to Madame de H...., and many other persons celebrated for their birth and talents.

Young, and of a warm constitution, Grimm had some love affairs at Paris, of which the following appears sufficiently remarkable to deserve being recorded. He became passionately enamoured of a virtuous nymph belonging to the Opera, whose name was Mademoiselle Fel. But the fair, strange to relate, rejecting his advances, he was entirely overset and fell into a sort of catalepsy which continued for several days. He remained stretched on his bed, with his eyes fixed and all his limbs stiffened, without speaking, without eating, without shewing any kind of sensibility. His friends believed him dead; the Abbé Raynal and Rousseau watched by his bed for several nights successively. The physician M. Senac augured better than they did; and in fact one morning Grimm rose suddenly from his bed, dressed himself, went about his business and never thought more of his chaste Lucretia.

The adventure, however, gave him great renown among the fair sex. From this moment he

appeared fully established that Grimm was the most sentimental and the most passionate of lovers, and some private memoirs authorize the belief that he did not find all ladies equally cruel with Mademoiselle Fel. Unluckily too much good fortune, which is apt to corrupt the heart, corrupted his in some degree; Jean-Jacques at least asserts that he became self-sufficient, proud and arrogant, and that he gave himself impertinent airs.* Be that as it may, Jean-Jacques from this time resolved never to see him more.

Grimm paid very great attention to his person. He was not handsome; his eyes were large and prominent, and the *tout-ensemble* of his physiognomy had in it something odd and discordant, but art was abundantly employed by him to assist nature. His toilette was a business of the highest importance, and on his dressing table were boxes of red and white paint as on that of a fine lady. This folly became so public that those who did not love him, and who knew that he filled up the strong lines of his cheeks with Spanish-white, called him the tyrant *Le Blanc.* But Grimm was

* M. de Marmontel in his memoirs of himself, recounting some instances of the wayward humours of Rousseau, among others mentions that "He could never pardon Grimm for having "taken precedence of him at the house of Madame de l'Epinay; "we may see in his memoirs how his morose vanity revenged "itself for this offence." *Mémoires de Marmontel,* Vol. III, page 211. It is no doubt to this circumstance Grimm alludes in the article wherein he treats of the death and character of Madame de l'Epinay, which will be found in Vol. IV. of these Anecdotes. —TRANSLATOR.

so agreeable in society, he had so much vivacity, so much ready wit, that he was the first to turn the laugh upon those that laughed at him.

The Count de F...., dying, Grimm displayed the utmost grief for his loss, and it was necessary to force him away from the spot where he had lost his benefactor and friend. He was carried to the Hôtel de Castries, where every morning he used to walk by himself in the gardens and weep for his loss, holding to his eyes a handkerchief moistened with tears. Rousseau indeed asserts that he only wept when any one was looking at him, but when he thought himself unobserved his handkerchief was put into his pocket, and a book was taken out to supply its place. But Rousseau was become towards the end of his life so morose, so prejudiced against Grimm, that his testimony may very well be suspected*.

When the Italian Buffa performers came to Paris, Grimm took their part very warmly. The capital was then divided into two strong parties; the one, which was composed of the elderly people, the great, the rich, and the women, adhered strenuously to Rameau, and defended the French music; the other consisting of the ardent spirits among the young men, who are always enthu-

* Marmontel relates that while M. de Grimm was secretary to the Count de Frise, he used to give a dinner every week to his friends, "At these batchelor's dinners," he says, "there reigned "the utmost frankness and gaiety, but this was a kind of cheer "in which Rousseau partook very moderately." *Mémoires de Marmontel*, Vol. I. page 337.—Translator.

siasts, always fond of novelty, supported the Buffa performers and the Italian music. Trouble and confusion reigned among the boxes, in the pit and in the lobbies. The Italian partisans ranged themselves at the Opera below the Queen's box, the French below the King's, and this gave occasion to the two parties being called *The King's corner* and *The Queen's corner*. Grimm was for the *Queen's corner* and distinguished himself in support of the party. The royalists attempting to turn them into ridicule, he answered by a little pamphlet full of wit, gaiety, and taste, called *The little Prophet of Boehmischbroda*. The other side beginning to argue with him, he silenced them by *A Letter on French Music*. This letter was taken up with great warmth, and nothing less was talked of than the author being exiled or sent to the Bastille; for a frivolous government thinks that it ought to defend its singers with as much warmth as it defends its frontiers. This warmth, however, subsided after awhile, and Grimm far from being bastilled, was every where extolled to the skies by the partisans of the Italian music.

I do not know whether M. de Grimm's knowledge in painting was equal to his knowledge in music, but Diderot had no hesitation in calling him his master. "If I have," says he to him in one of his letters, "any correct notions upon "painting and sculpture, it is to you that I owe "them." One would however be tempted to be-

lieve that the scholar in the latter end became more an adept than the master, since we find the latter ascribing to Guercino a picture which in reality is Guido's. Such an error cannot be passed over, even in an amateur who has any knowledge whatever upon the subject.

M. de Grimm's connections with the chiefs of the Encyclopedia and with people of the first rank in France, the variety of his knowledge and the pliability of his mind, could not fail to open to him a very splendid career. For some years he was secretary to the commanderies of the Duke of Orleans. From that time he kept up a literary correspondence with several German Princes, particularly with the Duke of Saxe-Gotha. He was flattered with receiving many instances of distinguished friendship and esteem from the Empress of Russia, the great Frederic of Prussia, and Gustavus III, King of Sweden. He was more particularly honoured with the confidence of Catherine II, whom he had visited at her court. The style of his writings is not always pure, some germanisms may be found in it, but it is always gay, lively, spirited, and is distinguished more than all by an extreme frankness, which he yet knows how perfectly to conciliate with the respect and deference due to sovereigns.

M. de Grimm was a philosopher, but his philosophy was of a kind that every gentleman and honest man may fairly avow.[a] It was a philosophy which enlightens without scorching, which

respects order and the laws. The Correspondence proves that he did not share in any way the excesses of some of the hotbrained children of the Encyclopedia, who, intending to serve the cause of reason, were betraying it at every moment. This character of wisdom and moderation acquired him ribbands and dignities, which were honourably obtained, without intrigue and without meanness. In 1776 the Duke of Saxe-Gotha appointed him his minister plenipotentiary to the Court of France; it was then that he became a man of quality, and that his plebeian name of Grimm was changed to the Baron de Grimm. His habits were not changed in consequence, he continued his literary correspondence as before, and acquitted himself like a man of sense and understanding in his new employment.

When the stormy days of the revolution clouded the atmosphere of France, and that it was no longer possible for the ministers of foreign powers to remain at Paris, M. de Grimm retired to the court of the Duke of Saxe-Gotha, and accepted the asylum offered him there by that Prince. In 1795 the Empress of Russia, who had a particular regard for him, appointed him her minister plenipotentiary to the States of the Circle of Lower Saxony. Paul I. confirmed him in this post, and he fulfilled the duties of it till, in consequence of a severe illness, he lost the sight of one eye, which obliged him to withdraw entirely from business. He then fixed his resi-

dence once more at Gotha. It was there that he passed the last years of his life, still faithful to the duties he had always cherished, cultivating learning and the arts as long as his strength would permit him. He died the nineteenth of December, 1807.

Besides the two pamphlets which have been mentioned in the course of this sketch, we have from M. de Grimm a *Latin Dissertation upon the History of Maximilian I*, some *German Letters*, and a few other trifles, a list of which may be found in the *Dictionary of Meusel.*

To a ready conception he joined a lively and gay imagination, an upright mind, an enlightened and correct judgment, and a great variety of knowledge. His criticisms were always just and impartial when they did not concern Freron, Clement, Palissot, or any of the enemies of the philosophical party. But was the cause of the Encyclopedia to be defended, he then could take no raillery, but overpowered his antagonists with sarcasms, with ridicule, with epigrams, and sometimes even with invectives.

TABLE

OF THE ARTICLES

CONTAINED IN THE FIRST VOLUME.

	Page
Historical, Political and Military Anecdotes of Europe, by the Abbé Raynal	1
A Treatise concerning Legions, after the manner of the ancient Romans, by Marshal Saxe	5
The Political Testament of Cardinal Alberoni	7
Exile of the Parliament, and arrival of the Italian Bouffons, at Paris	15
M. de Buffon elected a Member of the French Academy, on the death of the Archbishop of Sens	17
The British Merchant and other works translated from the English	20
Reasons why the English domestic novel is superior to the French	22
Reception of M. de Buffon at the French Academy and his speech on the occasion	26
Remarks on the fourth volume of M. de Buffon's Natural History	32
Pamphlets occasioned by the circumstances of the times	40
On the third volume of the Encyclopædia	43
Letter upon Music, by J. J. Rousseau	47
The Bishop of Montauban's head, required by the King of England	49
Essay on General History, by M. de Voltaire	49
The Count de Clermont elected a Member of the French Academy	51

Page
Second edition of Rousseau's Letter on Music 52
Rousseau's Speech upon the Arts and Sciences before the Academy at Dijon 53
Death of M. Nivelle de la Chaussée inventor of the species of Drama called by the French, Weeping Comedy.. 58
M. de Bougainville elected a Member of the French Academy 64
History of the Peace of Nimeguen..... 64
Pension given by the King of Prussia to M. d'Alembert 70
On the Happy Orphans, a novel, by M. de Crebillon.... 70
History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless, translated from the English 75
On the rage for translation, and on the translation of the Memoirs of the Court of Augustus, by Doctor Blackwell 77
On the third volume of M. de Voltaire's Essay on General History 80
Anecdote respecting the first performance of M. de Voltaire's Herod and Mariamne..... 82
On M. de Cochin's Observations upon the Antiquities of Herculaneum..... 82
Edict of the Spanish Minister M. de La Ensenada..... 87
Mr. Hume's ideas with respect to politeness..... 94
On painting in wax, instead of oil, by the Count de Caylus 95
Anecdotes of the Abbé Terrasson with some account of a posthumous work of his 98
Rumours of M. de Voltaire's Pucelle being spuriously printed..... 103
Comparison between the French and some other languages, with remarks on some translations by the Abbé Prevost 103
Farther particulars with respect to painting in wax colours 114
Death of the Baron de Montesquieu 115
On the first Canto of Hudibras translated from the English 116
A pamphlet respecting the art of painting in wax..... 117
On the state of Society as it relates to the progress of dramatic writing..... 118

Page
On mildewed Corn, by M. de Tillet..... 128
Upon the origin and foundation of inequality among mankind, by J. J. Rousseau..... 131
The Lemonade Muse, by Madame Bourette..... 139
Account of M. Petit, Minister of the parish of Mont Chauvet, and his tragedy of David and Bathsheba.. 140
On the Memoirs of Madame de Staal..... 152
Account of a work upon the state of the Arts in England, by M. Rouquet..... 159
Another anecdote of M. Petit minister of Mont Chauvet.. 161
M. de Boismont elected a Member of the French Academy 161
Letter from M. de Voltaire to Madame de Monrevel..... 162
On the fifth volume of M. de Buffon's Natural History.. 163
The History of Genevieve, by the Countess de Revel.... 165
On the Abbé Prevost's translation of Sir Charles Grandison 174
Letter of the Dauphin to the widow of M. de Chambort... 175
M. de Voltaire's works of La Pucelle, a poem on Natural Religion, and one on the Lisbon Earthquake..... 176
Article upon the Fontange, sent by a lady to M. Diderot for the Encyclopædia..... 180
Philosophical Thoughts, by a Citizen of Montmartre.... 183
Memoirs of M. de La Porte, valet-de-chambre to Louis XIV 183
On the Beggar's Opera, translated from the English..... 185
On the Talents requisite for a Negociator..... 186
Memoirs of the Marquis de Torcy, illustrating the History of Negociations..... 188
On the general propensity to caluminate Women, with a Defence of them..... 190
Madame de Maintenon's Letters, by M. de La Beaumelle 196
Description of M. Pigale's monument to Marshal Saxe.. 203
On the sixth volume of M. de Buffon's Natural History.... 205
Death of M. de Fontenelle and particulars respecting him 211
The Lisbon Earthquake, a tragedy, by a Hair-dresser.... 223
Letters from Miss Fanny Butler, to Lord Cuitombridge.. 223
On the Age of Louis the Fourteenth, by M. de Voltaire.. 224

Page

Why is the French language more chaste than the Latin.. 230
Jean Petit the Cordelier's ideas with respect to assassination 231
The science of Politics compared with that of Medicine.... 232
On the Abbé de Mably's Principles of Negociation..... 235
The Friend of Man, or a Treatise on Population, by M. de Mirabeau..... 238
On the seventh volume of the Encyclopædia..... 240
The Reveries of Marshal Saxe..... 241
Memoirs of the House of Brandenburg, by the King of Prussia..... 247
Death of M. Nicol the great Geometrician..... 247
Prizes instituted by the King for dramatic authors..... 248
Narrative of the Court of Portugal against the Jesuists of Paraguay..... 249
Political Annals, by M. de St. Pierre..... 250
Letter from M. d'Argental to the Marquis de Rochemore 253
M. Colardeau's translation of Pope's Letter from Eloisa to Abelard..... 257
Death of M. Antoine de Jussieu brother to the Botanist.. 257
The Congress of Cythera, by Count Algarotti..... 258
Continuation of the translation of Sir Charles Grandison.. 261
M. Helvetius's Recantation respecting his work on the Mind..... 262
Death of M. Bouguer of the Academy of Sciences..... 263
The Article respecting Geneva in the Encyclopædia..... 263
Death of Madame de Graffigny..... 268
Letter from Madame de L'Epinay to M. de Saint Lambert..... 268
Letter from the King of Prussia to Marshal Saxe..... 273
Answers to J. J. Rousseau's work against Plays..... 275
Decree of the Council of State against the Encyclopædia 280
Translations of some works, by David Hume..... 282
Reception of M. Le Franc de Pompignan at the French Academy..... 287
On the Comedy of the Philosophers, by Palissot..... 290

Page
Panegyric of Reinhard, the shoemaker, by the King of Prussia 294
Translation of Thomson's Seasons 295
Upon Mr. Hume's Dissertation on the Rules of Taste.. 295
Letter from J. J. Rousseau to M. Palissot 299
Complaint of M. de Saint Foix against the Christian Journal 300
Letter from the King of Prussia to the Marquis d'Argens 301
History of the Russian Empire under Peter the Great, by M. de Voltaire..... 303
The Fair Penitent, a Tragedy by M. Colardeau, imitated from the English..... 311
On M. de Laurent's invention of an artificial arm..... 312
Mademoiselle Corneille patronised by M. de Voltaire.... 312
J. J. Rousseau's work on Education published..... 314
Examination of J. J. Rousseau's work on Education.... 315
The Death of Socrates, a Tragedy, by M. de Sauvigny.. 337
Death of M. de Crebillon, the elder 339
Sequel to the Examination of J. J. Rousseau's work on Education..... 340
Seditious Letter, published at Geneva, in favour of Rousseau 354
Saracen's Fables 355
Collection of every thing published respecting the Calas Family 357
Charge brought against the physician, Bordeu, by M. Bouvard..... 361
Conversation between the author and a lady, on the Memoirs of Madame de Blemont 364
Death of Louis Racine, son to the great Racine..... 378
Death of M. de Marivaux, and remarks upon his works.. 379
Death of Bouchardon, the Sculptor 380
Madame Belot's translation of Hume's History 383
Revision of Calas's Affair 386

Page

Second volume of M. de Voltaire's History of Peter the Great..... 387
Translation of the Tragedy of Tancred and Sigismunda.. 389
Works of Stanislaus, King of Poland..... 393
Translation of Lady M. W. Montague's Letters..... 395
The Earl of Warwick, a tragedy by M. de la Harpe.... 397
Two extraordinary children of Mozart, the musician 405
Letters written from the country by M. Tronchin 407

HISTORICAL & LITERARY

MEMOIRS AND ANECDOTES.

PART THE FIRST.

May 1758.

In the communications required of us, we shall pay little attention to those pamphlets with which Paris is daily inundated by bad writers, and would-be *beaux esprits*: a set of beings who are among the inconveniencies attached to literature. We shall rather endeavour to give an exact account of, and fair criticisms upon such books as deserve the public attention; not suffering, in particular, any thing to escape us that may appear interesting to the curiosity of foreigners. These pages will be consecrated to truth, to confidence, and to frankness. The friendship in which we are united with many men of letters, of whom we shall have occasion to speak, shall in no way influence our judgment. In relating the impressions upon the public, we shall endeavour always to support our own opinions with valid reasons.

The Abbé Raynal of the Academy of Sciences and Belles-Lettres in Prussia, has just presented the world with two volumes in 8vo. under the title of "*Historical, Military, and Political Anecdotes of Europe, from the elevation of Charles the Fifth, to the Imperial Throne, to the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, in* 1748." It is the commencement of a considerable work, the sequel of which the Author promises, if the beginning should meet the public approbation. The Abbé Raynal is already known to the world, by two publications, which have gone through several editions: *The History of the Stadtholderate,* and *The History of the Parliament of England.* He has been reproached, not without reason, with a fatiguing and involved style, with a rage for antitheses, and with giving portraits sketched by chance, and loaded with contradictions; in a word, with a manner too brilliant, which has so much the less claim to indulgence, as it makes great pretensions to charm, and seeks to impose upon the reader, by false ornaments. The first merit of a painter, particularly where history is concerned, is fidelity; and that truth of colouring which is often independent of the facts, and is even unconnected with their truth, is indisputably the first talent of a historian.

The Abbé Raynal tells us, in his advertisement, that he has endeavoured, in this new work, to correct these faults. His docility and modesty are undoubtedly deserving of great com-

mendation, especially in an age when these are qualities not much in fashion among men of letters. His plan is grand, splendid, and entertaining. He begins with a very interesting epoch in history, the elevation of Charles the Fifth to the Imperial Throne. It was from that time that the system of Europe, such as we see it at the present day, was established; its history is ever since a connected chain of events, which has extended to our own times. The two volumes in question are divided into seven epochs, or seven parts. *First*, the election of Charles the Fifth in 1519.—*Secondly*, the civil wars of Spain in 1520 and 1521.—*Thirdly*, the war of Navarre in 1521.—*Fourthly*, the wars between Charles the Fifth and Francis the First, from 1521 to 1544.—*Fifthly*, the revolution which took place in Sweden between 1515 and 1544.—*Sixthly*, the history of the divorce of Henry the Eighth of England, and Catherine of Arragon, between 1527 and 1534.—*Seventhly*, the history of the conspiracy of Fiesco in 1546 and 1547.—It appears to me that the author has seized, very happily, the manner in which the history of any age ought to be written. M. de Voltaire has given us an excellent model of the kind in his *Age of Louis the Fourteenth*. You will not find in the Abbé Raynal's work, the genius, the fire, and the pencil of M. de Voltaire, but you will find much clearness, much penetration, much logical reasoning, and a great love of truth; qualities which ought to be very sufficient for those who wish to

be agreeably instructed. His style is perhaps not natural, but it is no longer fatiguing; some instances of negligence might be cited, but where are they not to be found. The literati have not failed to reproach him with this occasional incorrectness, and still more with the number of portraits introduced into the work. It is certain that those who are very conversant with the writings of Plutarch, will not easily reconcile themselves to this manner. That great master in the art of writing had no occasion to draw portraits, he had the secret of shewing us the man himself.

But in judging a work, we should begin with approving, or apologizing for the plan and form; it would be useless to dwell upon details, if the form be displeasing. Allowing then, that of the Abbé Raynal's work to pass, it must be acknowledged that the portraits here given are not loaded like the former with antitheses and contradictions, and that he has taken a more ample view of the men he intended to paint. Another charge which might be brought against the Abbé, and one which has been often urged against Tacitus, is, excess of reasoning and sagacity. It is want of properly knowing mankind, to endeavour to point out the reasons and the secret springs that have produced events, though it must be owned that this is specious in appearance, if experience were not against it. But the philosopher sees plainly that heroes, amidst the tumult of business, cannot reason as their historians do in their closets, and that the

actions of men, and the most remarkable events that take place, are commonly the result of chance, of the passions, or of a thousand circumstances little known and very unimportant. We have no doubt that the Abbé Raynal will continue his labours according to the plan he proposes. It is a work which may become classical for young men, for women, and for a number of idle people who cannot so easily obtain instruction elsewhere: it is the work of a man of talents and is calculated to amuse and instruct.

A Treatise concerning Legions, after the example of the ancient Romans, or Memoirs upon the French Infantry, composed by the Marshal Count de Saxe, a posthumous work in 12mo.—Such is the title of a work just printed here, though ostensibly at the Hague; its authenticity, at least as to the essential parts, cannot be doubted by those who were acquainted with the modes of thinking of the great man to whom it is ascribed. He draws a picture in strong colours, and unhappily but too true, of all the misfortunes which have happened among the French troops from a want of discipline; and traces, on the other hand, the advantages that result from a well-regulated and exact discipline. The project of legions appears founded in wisdom; according to his ideas, each legion should be composed of four regiments, and be commanded by a general; each regiment should have four battalions, each battalion four companies, and each company

four squadrons. The Marshal shews, with much precision, the advantages of this arrangement: it is probable, however, that it will never take place, for this reason, that men, who are drawn on by nature towards their ruin, may easily be corrupted, and change to worse, but that they will never have the strength of mind to listen to reason, and reform abuses. At the end of this pamphlet is a very remarkable letter written in 1750, by the Marshal to the Count d'Argenson, then minister at war, on the subject of the new exercise introduced among the French troops. The hero speaks out plainly; he says that the French infantry, from want of discipline, though otherwise among the bravest troops in Europe, cannot fight in the plain, and he proves his position by examples, ever since the commencement of the century. All the affairs in which the French have had the advantage, he says, have been affairs of posts, all those in which they have been beaten, have been rencounters on the plain. The example of the army of M. de Turenne, is no proof to the contrary: the infantry he says were then well-disciplined, or at least the discipline of the enemy was not better, which amounts to nearly the same thing. He maintains that the French would never have dared to undertake crossing a plain with a body of infantry, before a numerous body of cavalry, and would never have maintained their ground several hours with fifteen or twenty battalions, in the midst of an enemy, as the English did at the battle of Fontenoy,

without being shaken by the efforts of their cavalry. He speaks every where with the frankness of which great men only are capable.

This Treatise must necessarily increase the general impatience, to see the *Réveries* of this singular and illustrious man which he has left in the hands of his nephew the Count de Friese.

June 1753.

The Political Testament of Cardinal Alberoni, collected from various memoirs, letters, and conversations of his eminence, has just been printed at Lausanne, in Switzerland. It is said that we are indebted for the publication to a professor of that town who was very intimate with the Cardinal, and that the Testament is the substance of many conversations which he had with him; others say that it is compiled from papers left by the cardinal. Be this as it may, the Editor might have saved himself the trouble of labouring to establish the authenticity of the work which he does in a very long preface, taking occasion, at the same time, to enter into a discussion of the dispute excited some time since by M. de Voltaire, upon the subject of the Political Testament of Cardinal Richelieu. It is sufficient to read the work ascribed to Cardinal Alberoni, to be convinced that it is the production of a profound, extensive, and luminous genius, astonishing even in his visions: I say in his visions, for visions there always must be to a certain degree in all political speculations. The Cardinal no sooner

opens a career to himself, than he runs through it with a rapidity which will not permit wise or timid persons to follow him; it is a vast and ardent genius which embraces every thing at a glance, and which loses itself sometimes in the immense vortex of possibilities. This defect, if it be one, is the only one with which the Cardinal can be reproached; it proves the prodigious fecundity of his genius. Since it costs him as little to throw down as to raise great edifices, we cannot be astonished at seeing his different projects destroy each other. Nothing is wanting to this work but to be better compiled and better written; you will observe many things ill-written, ill-arranged, and obscure; a little more method and precision would have been very desirable, and might have been given to it without difficulty. As it is a book which ought to be read and studied, we shall enter into some details in examining it, and hazard some remarks, the object of which will be to excite a desire of becoming acquainted with it.

The first six chapters relate to Spain, and appear, with that on the ministry of the Cardinal de Fleury, superior to the other parts. They contain not only the remarks of a politician who has made deep researches, but the reflections of a philosopher accustomed to close and profound reasoning, and who understands mankind thoroughly. How happens it that a people who by their character and their resources ought to be the first in Europe have for so long a time been in a state of weakness

and almost of annihilation? And what are the remedies for such a misfortune?—These are questions which occupy the Cardinal very much. The Spaniard, who carries elevation of sentiment and the principles of honour and probity even into the most trifling things—the Spaniard, master of the treasures of America—only wants to be well-governed. It is true the Cardinal does not sufficiently feel that this is a want of all others the most difficult to be remedied. A true King is of all rare things the most rare to be found. The Cardinal ascribes all the ills under which Spain has so long groaned to the faults of her Kings, enormous in themselves, and constantly increasing; but, like a skilful physician, at the same time that he analyses the disease he indicates the remedies. It is well known, for example, how much agriculture is neglected in Spain; to encourage it the Cardinal would have the King himself become an agriculturist. Alberoni, King of Spain, might doubtless have succeeded in setting such an example to his subjects; but it is only the man of genius, who has a head to conceive such expedients, that is capable of carrying them into execution. A man of an ordinary capacity becomes ridiculous when he enters upon bold singularities; he resembles a child who repeats his lesson without warmth and without grace, having learnt it without reflection. It is true that a man has good materials for going to work with in a people naturally prone to great and splendid things. it only requires some address to

give an air of grandeur to whatever he seeks to bring forwards. This expedient, of which Kings rarely know how to avail themselves, would without doubt be a source of great happiness to a state. Would it not be much better to establish laws on a system of rewards for doing good than on one of mere penalties for misdeeds?—A father, to make himself obeyed by his children, encourages them by promises. For the rest, none of the Cardinal's remarks seem to have diminished the grand idea he has conceived of the Spanish character, and in this way he sums up his reflections upon it: "Although "this nation seems as if it ought to be at the head "of all the people of Europe, history informs us "that, in spite of her numerous advantages, she "has never played a very superior or a very brilliant part. From the time of the quarrel between "Carthage and Rome, Spain, almost always governed by foreigners, always considered as a province, has often been the theatre of their exploits and the reward of their victories."—Perhaps the too romantic and too tranquil elevation of mind of the Spaniard does not permit him, whatever the Cardinal may say, to carry into his pursuits that warmth and activity without which nothing can ever be effected.

All that the Cardinal says relative to the Pretender appears to be conceived with great justice; it is a chimera to wish to replace him on the throne of England when no possible good could result from it.

The chapter on the ministry of Cardinal Fleury is admirable, as we have hinted above. The partisans of this minister and Marshal Belle-Isle must be so much the more dissatisfied with it, as it is too forcible not to strike every body. Alberoni shows plainly how much Fleury was out of his place, how entirely the turn of his character, too little, too timid, too much given to minutiæ, incapacitated him from governing properly such a nation as France.

All that our author says upon the interests of the Germanic body, upon the Pragmatic sanction of the Emperor Charles the Sixth, is equally just. The partition treaty, which he devises as a substitute for the former, chimerical as it is, shows the vast extent of the Cardinal's views. The chapter on Holland, although full of ideas, is long and ill done; it ought to have been more clear, more methodical, and more concise. That on the North is not sufficiently detailed. Such is the general idea of this important work; it remains to point out some passages which struck us more particularly.

The Cardinal speaks very forcibly against a great multiplicity of charges, and offices; they only prove, he says, the embarrassment occasioned to a State by its inhabitants. They who are repeating incessantly a thing true in itself, that the real strength of a State consists in the number of its inhabitants, should begin by teaching us the secret of employing them usefully.

The splendid and useless embassy of M. de

Belle-Isle to Frankfort, and the misfortunes of which it was the cause, give occasion to the Cardinal to remark, that perhaps the most important defect which a great project can have is to be loaded with superfluous branches; they are seldom merely useless, and when injurious they are always very essentially so.

Our author does the Emperor Leopold the honour of believing that the assistance he gave the houses of Saxony and Brandenburg, in procuring themselves the regal dignity, was the effect of policy. "To succeed," says he, "one day in "making the Electors his subjects he had no means "more certain than to begin by making them "Kings."—In this opinion I believe the Cardinal to be in a two-fold error. Imprimis, he appears to ascribe to Leopold views which he had not; and it is no uncommon thing for politicians who have very extensive and well-combined views themselves to give others credit for having the same. To me it appears that the Emperor only then saw how necessary it was to attach those two houses closely to him; he never thought of the effects that such a change would produce in fifty or sixty years. In the second place, if the Emperor had really as enlarged ideas as the Cardinal imputes to him, he was certainly deceived as to the means by which they were to be carried into effect. For, not to mention the King of Poland, in whom the regal dignity is nothing but an empty title, the Emperor ought to have foreseen that in assisting the house

of Brandenburg to invest itself with royalty he was raising up a powerful and formidable rival to his own house. How small soever were the advantages which Frederick William the First derived from the crown, it was, according to my ideas, easy to foresee that upon the head of a man of superior talents, whom the chances of human life might raise up, it might be of great weight in the aggrandisement of the house of Brandenburg. The Cardinal, who sees so clearly that the Pretender, though placed to-day by the house of Bourbon on the throne of England, would not the less be to-morrow the natural enemy of France, ought equally to feel that the house of Brandenburg, raised by the house of Austria to the highest degree of power, would not the less, under the actual system of Europe, never be the natural ally of Austria.

The Cardinal's ideas respecting the ancients do not appear to me equally just with those relative to the moderns. He conceives that it would be very easy to convert the Germans into a citizen people, and make of its princes men superior to the Scipios, the Cæsars, and the Ciceros. "In "an age," says he, "where the education of a "Baron is superior to what the greatest men of "antiquity ever received, is it to be supposed that "a genius of the same stamp is never to be found?" —Whatever the Cardinal may say, I cannot help thinking that there is not any one of our Kings who would make a bad bargain in exchanging his education against that of Socrates or Cato.

The Cardinal compares Sweden to a rivulet become a torrent, which the enlargement of its bed renders less considerable, till new meltings of the snows produce again the means of filling it. This comparison appears to me extremely new, brilliant, and appropriate.

A criticism made by him upon the President de Montesquieu struck me as extremely just and sensible. "The spirit of system," he says, "is "not less dangerous in politics than in philosophy. "There is a good deal of temerity in seeking the "causes of the grandeur and decline of the Ro- "mans, in the Constitution of their State. Events "in which human prudence had the least possible "share are epochs rather than consequences; it "belongs to history alone to detail the causes of "the grandeur and fall of States." We must observe here, after the Cardinal, that M. de Montesquieu has fallen into the same error, in his *Spirit of the Laws*, with respect to the English Constitution. He seeks, and has the secret of always finding, the causes of events in that Constitution. If States were arranged, like a system of philosophy, on paper, this procedure might answer very well; but we see every day that the greatest events, even the laws and constitution of a State, are only the work of chance, and of a thousand arbitrary circumstances, between which indeed a lively imagination might discover some connection, though none such ever existed in reality, and which consequently can never satisfy those who seek for truth.

I shall not dwell any longer upon this work, excepting merely to observe, that it is a proper subject of study and meditation alike for politicians and philosophers.

July 1753.

The quarrels between the parliament of Paris and the Court, the exile of the parliament, and the transfer of the Grand Chamber to Pontoise, are events which formed subjects of conversation and amusement to Paris for four-and-twenty hours. All that the respectable body in question has done for a twelvemonth past, to merit the attention of the public, has never been able to excite a thirtieth part of what has been bestowed upon the revolution that has taken place in the musical world. The Italian actors who have performed for the last ten months on the stage of the Opera at Paris, and who are called here *bouffons*, have so completely absorbed the attention of the Parisians, that the parliament, notwithstanding its proceedings have so just a claim to celebrity, could not fail of being entirely neglected. A person of some penetration observed that the arrival of Manelli prevented a civil war among us, since but for this event the idlers and gossipers would undoubtedly have been occupied with the disputes between the parliament and the clergy, and the fanaticism with which people's heads are easily heated might have led to fatal consequences.

Manelli is the name of the Italian performer

who plays in the interludes. His portrait in crayons, in the character which he sustains in an interlude entitled *The Music Master*, has been painted in a very superior manner, and will be exhibited this year in the saloon of the Royal Academy of Painting at the Louvre; it is done by M. de La-Tour, who has carried his art to great perfection. We reserve to a future period to speak of the strange revolution effected by the *bouffons*; few events can give a more just idea of the French character. At present let us return to the parliament.

A few days after its exile we had here at once two or three editions of the *Remonstrances* which it would have made to the King, and which his Majesty did not think proper to hear. At the head of these *Remonstrances* are the subjects upon which they were to run, and which are so much the more forcible as they are of the extremest simplicity. The first part of them is loosely put together and long, the second is more compact and more spirited. In general the success they have met with at Paris has not been such as might be expected, considering that the work is so interesting to the whole nation. These Remonstrances were preceded by a very curious pamphlet, entitled *Tradition of the facts which manifest the system of Independence opposed by the Bishops in different ages to the invariable principles of the supreme Jurisdiction of the King over all his subjects indiscriminately; and on the necessity of permitting the secular Judges to act against their er-*

terprises, in order to maintain the observance of the laws, and to secure the public tranquillity. This pamphlet, in which is collected together, for the instruction of the faithful, all the attempts of the clergy against the secular power, is almost as amusing as a novel. We learn from it that in the fourteenth century the clergy had forbidden new-married couples to sleep together for the first three nights of their marriage under a considerable fine, and that the parliament was obliged to make a provisional regulation which bore in substance, *that as to a man's not sleeping with his wife at the commencement of the marriage, it should be permitted for him to do so till the time when a final decision was made upon the question.* This temporary indulgence was followed by a definitive decree in which it was freely permitted to the new-married couple to sleep together from the very commencement of the marriage, without having recourse to the bishop for his sanction.

The seat in the Academy vacated by the death of the Archbishop of Sens has just been conferred on M. de Buffon, Inspector of the King's Botanic Garden, a Member of the Academy of Sciences, and author of the *Natural History.* The addition of such a man cannot but do great honour to the Academy, as his genius has long contributed to the honour of the nation. M. de Buffon is gone on a little excursion into Burgundy, whence he will shortly return to make his speech on being re-

ceived into the Academy; this will be a few days before the festival of St. Louis.

This seat was at first destined by the Academy and by the public voice to M. Piron, author of Gustavus and some other pieces, but more especially of *La Metromanie*, which is a *chef-d'œuvre* in its way, and the only one that can be called so, of all the comedies produced since the death of the sublime Molière. Two days before that fixed for the election of M. Piron, the King sent for the President de Montesquieu, whom fate had made director of the Academy for this occasion, and informed him, that, having heard of the intentions of the Academy to elect M. Piron as their new member, and knowing that gentleman to be the author of many licentious writings, he wished them to fix upon some other person to fill up the vacancy. At the same time his Majesty declared that he would not have any one chosen from among the order of advocates. It is said that this service has been rendered to M. Piron by the devout, with the antient bishop of Mirepoix at their head. Piron says that it is a blow with the crosier which he has received from the bishop, and that this prelate found his own picture in the fourth stanza of a famous ode written by the poet, which has been made use of against him on the present occasion: thus is a man excluded whose talents would have done honour to the Academy.

M. de Montesquieu having made known the King's pleasure to the Academicians, the Marshal

de Richelieu proposed that the election should be postponed for ten days, that time might be allowed to fix upon some other person worthy to fill the place. This advice was adopted by a plurality of voices, although the Abbé Olivet pronounced it to be *unprecedented* and *indecent*. The main business of fixing the election being concluded, Marshal Richelieu loudly demanded to know whether among the rules of the Academy there were no pains or penalties pronounced against those who in giving their suffrages should employ terms so offensive as *unprecedented* and *indecent?* M. Duclos said *reprove and pardon*, such is the law. The voices were collected, when it was unanimously agreed that M. Olivet could not understand the force of the terms he had used. Such was the after-piece which concluded this meeting, and at the expiration of the ten days M. de Buffon was elected by a large majority of votes.

M. de Bougainville, secretary to the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres, who has translated the *Anti-Lucretius of the Cardinal de Polignac*, which nobody has read, and has written *A Parallel between Alexander and Thamas Koulikan*, which nobody can read, has had the assurance to contest this place with M. Piron, M. de Buffon, M. d'Alembert, and many other men of very superior merit. The public attribute the exclusion of M. Piron very much to this young man, who affects a great deal of devotion, and who has the reputation of being very quarrelsome. As his

bad health was urged as a reason for electing him, because in all probability he would not occupy the place very long, M. Duclos humorously observed that *the Academy was not an extreme unction.*

August, 1753.

For some time we have had nothing but works translated from the English. This fashion has lasted a much longer time than fashions in general continue here; nor, according to appearances, is its day by any means past. Since, in consequence, all those whose own works will never be read, now employ themselves in translating the works of others, and good works are scarce things in all nations, it follows, that a great many bad ones are translated, and very few good. A free translation of a work entitled *The British Merchant* is among the number of the latter, and appears of so much greater utility to the French nation inasmuch as they have scarcely any thing of the kind in their own language, and that it is their interest, more than that of any other nation in Europe, to cultivate commerce, and study whatever has any relation to it.

The Abbé Isard, of the Royal Academy of Belles-Lettres, at Roüen, minister of a parish in Normandy, a man of great merit, has just given us four volumes of translations from some of the English poets, under the title of *An Idea of English Poetry*. This collection contains, like all other collections that were ever published, a few fine

specimens, several middling ones, and a great many bad. Besides this, we have just been presented with *Historical and Philological Letters from Lord Orrery upon the Life and Writings of Dean Swift.* It is a father who writes to his son, and not hoping that he will ever be turned aside from reading the works of this celebrated Irish Satirist, which he considers as very dangerous, endeavours, in these letters, to render them as little pernicious as possible by his instructions, and the reflections he makes upon the author's life and actions. Such is the spirit in which the letters are written;—that is, they are intended as an antidote against the poison which the author supposes to be spread through the works of the Dean of St. Patrick's.

These and many other presents made us by the corporation of translators, without our consent, we are ready to pass over; but there is one to which equal lenience cannot be shewn, the translation of *William Pickle.* This has, in its own country, the reputation of being the worst novel in England; a reputation which it perfectly sustains in France.* The translation is said to be by M. Toussaint, author of a celebrated work,

* It is to be presumed that the author alludes here to the novel of *Peregrine Pickle*, whose name may very probably have been changed to *William Pickle*, by the French translator; but it is not easy to comprehend whence he has derived the idea that it is considered, in England as one of the worst of our novels, since, if not an universal favourite among us, it has certainly, at least, many warm admirers. That it should not meet the French

The Manners, which seems to owe its fame to the good fortune of having been torn and burnt. In this work, the author has presented us with a great deal of common-place stuff, such as is to be found every where; and he now seems to occupy himself in translating works which ought never to be brought from the primeval obscurity to which, by their nature, they were doomed. Of this description is a wretched novel of a *Little Dog*, with which we were favoured by him about two years ago, and such is the novel in question, *William Pickle;* nobody that I have yet met with has been able to read it through.

The English have a species of domestic novel which is entirely unknown to the French. Of this kind are the novels of Fielding, an admirable author of the present day, who has just published a new one under the title of *Amelia*. This writer merits undoubtedly a distinguished place among those who have added to the reputation of their country; he is perfectly original, a great painter of human nature, is always true, and sometimes no less sublime than Molière. His *Tom Jones, or the Foundling*; his *Charlotte Summers, or the Or-*

taste is not at all surprizing, since the manners are those of a peculiar class of people only in the country, not even general national manners, and can, therefore, hardly be understood by foreigners, or, if understood, not such as they could be at all expected to relish. The same remarks may, perhaps, apply in great measure, to *Pompey the Little*, a censure of which will be found as the reader proceeds.—*Translator.*

phan;* and, above all, his *Joseph Andrews and Parson Abraham Adams*, are works excellent in their kind, full of character, and displaying true genius. It appears astonishing, at the first glance, that the French, who have in their language many good novels, have none which paint their domestic manners and habits. When one reflects a little, however, the mystery is explained, and we find that, if they have no pictures of this kind, it is not for want of painters, but for want of originals. When the characters of our *beaux* and *belles* have been sketched, the materials are nearly exhausted; we are presented with almost all the national traits that could be introduced into a French *domestic novel.* Of this kind are the works of M. Crebillon, the younger, which are the only novels we have that can properly be called of a domestic nature. Novels, in the style of those of the Abbé Prevost, are of a different class, I should rather compare them to tragedy, and the materials that form tragedy are nearly the same among people of all nations, because the greater passions of which it treats are universal, and belonging to human nature itself, are every where actuated by the same springs. But comedy and domestic novels must necessarily be different among different people, be-

* Here again a remark must be made upon a mistake of the French author, in ascribing the novel of *Charlotte Summers* to Fielding; the English reader will know, at once, that it is not the production of his pen. The French are in the error of ascribing many more novels to Fielding than he ever wrote; some of Smollett's novels are ascribed to him, among which, if I am not very much mistaken, is *Count Fathom.—Translator.*

cause they paint those minor features of character which properly form what we understand by the characteristic features of the nation, and in which no two nations resemble each other.

It would, perhaps, then be but accurate to say that the French have no *domestic novels*, and that they have had no comedies since Molière, because they have had no national manners; and, going a step farther, to conclude that they have had no national manners, because none but free nations have any. That little country, known by the name of Greece,—what variety of characters did it not contain?—What could be more different than the characters of the Athenian, the Spartan, the Theban, the Macedonian?—All these people, however, inhabited the same climate; but liberty and their laws, which were founded upon this basis, not only distinguished each, as a people, in a very striking manner from the other, but brought forth, with features scarce less strongly marked, the peculiar character of each individual. No constraint was known in society, every one dared to be himself, he did not endeavour to resemble others, to follow one model, according to the rules of good-breeding which we have established. It is owing to this reputation, and to the general disposition which is the consequence of it, that we have no longer any manners, any character, amongst us. Let any one go into a circle of fifteen or twenty persons, and remain there three hours together, it would scarcely be possible for him to distinguish the

fool from the man of wit and talents, all hold the same opinions, all talk the same jargon, each one is a perfect resemblance of the other, that is to say, no one, properly speaking, resembles any thing; these are reasons sufficient why we have no *domestic novels*. Add to this, that all the states are confounded in society; that the *Great Lord*, the magistrate, the financier, the man of letters, the artist, are treated in the same manner; we have, therefore, properly speaking, no state at all but that of a *Man of the World*, and consequently no other foibles but those of a *petit-maître*. The English, on the contrary, have preserved, with their liberty, the privilege of being each one individually such as nature has formed him, of not concealing his opinions nor the prejudices and manners of the profession to which he belongs. For this reason many of their *domestic novels* are extremely entertaining, even to foreigners, who have never had an opportunity of being personally acquainted with English manners, for when a picture is well sketched we can feel its merit, its truth, and its resemblance, even without having any knowledge of the original.

A little novel recently published has, in some measure, suggested to me these reflections. It is entitled *A Journey to Mantes, or the Vacation of N....*, and is ornamented with copper-plates. The hero of this novel is a young provincial, destined by his father to the study of the law. With this view he is placed under a solicitor, at Paris,

to learn his business, which solicitor has a wife, some daughters, and some other clerks. The vacation arrives, and the solicitor goes to pass it at Mantes, taking with him his whole family and our young provincial, the last of whom meets with some love-adventures, which form the basis of the novel. Here then we have a *domestic novel*, but one which nobody can read. It is that, independently of the want of talent in the author, the personages are all of a description which have no existence in polished society, consequently we cannot feel interested in their adventures.

The quarters of *La Halle* and the *Place Maubert* have undoubtedly their appropriate manners, and manners very strongly marked; but they are not those of the nation, and are, therefore, not fit subjects to be painted. Every one is disgusted with the quarrel between the sempstress and the hackney-coachman in the *Marianne* of Marivaux, yet nothing can be given more exactly according to nature; nothing, however, can be in a worse taste than such a picture.

September, 1753.

On the day of the Festival of Saint Louis, the Academy held a public sitting, when M. de Buffon made his speech of admission; it was answered by M. de Monerif, as director. M. de Buffon did not confine himself to reminding us that the Chancellor Seguier was a great man, that Cardinal Richelieu was a very great man, and that

Louis the Fourteenth, and Louis the Fifteenth were also great men, that the Archbishop of Sens was a great man, and in short that all the forty members of the Academy were great men. To these common-place topics M. de Buffon did not, I say, confine himself; this justly celebrated man, despising the vapid and wearying eulogiums which usually form the basis of such sort of speeches, thought proper to discuss a subject worthy of his pen and of the Academy, in giving us his ideas upon style. On this occasion it has been said, that the Academy had taken a master in the art of writing; it might have been added, in reference to M. de Moncrif's answer, that it had done well, for such a master was very much wanted.

M. de Buffon's speech, which has been printed, was interrupted in the delivery three or four times by bursts of applause from the whole assembly; that of M. de Moncrif gave time for the enthusiasm to subside, and the spirits to become tranquil. M. de Buffon, in treating of style, gave us himself a perfect model of it. His speech merits not only the attention of those who are in the habit of writing, and who ought consequently to study with the utmost care his precepts as well as his practice, it would be no less useful to those who occupy themselves with reading, only as an amusement equally agreeable and satisfactory. By attending to his principles, readers would acquire a habit of discriminating the good writers from the bad, of deciding upon the merits of a

work with taste and judgment, of selecting and arranging happily the subjects of their studies; things which are become indispensable since we are inundated to such a degree with wretched pamphlets, and larger works of a very middling kind.

Style, says M. de Buffon, is nothing but the order and movement in which we arrange our thoughts. If we think closely, if we knit our ideas well together, the style becomes strong, nervous, and concise; if on the contrary our ideas are slow in their march, and connect themselves only through the medium of the words, however elegant they may be, the style will be diffuse, poor, and dragging. To write well is at the same time to think well, to feel well, and to express well; it is to have at once soul, talents, and taste. Style supposes a re-union of all the intellectual faculties; ideas alone form the basis of style; harmony of expression is only an accessory quality and depends chiefly upon the sensibility of the organs. A little ear is sufficient to enable a writer to avoid discordance of sounds, and the exercise of that ear in reading some of our best poets and orators, will lead him by force and imitation into poetical cadence and oratorical turns. But imitation never created any thing, and this harmony of words cannot therefore form the basis, or constitute the essential tone of style; it may even be found in writings wholly void of ideas.

This remark of M. de Buffon being very just, it cannot surely be denied that the mode of educating our youths at college is extremely absurd; that it is not only useless, but even pernicious to oblige them to write when their heads are void of idea's; and that on the contrary a period so precious and inestimable as that of youth, should rather be employed in endeavouring to enlarge and expand the faculties of the mind, by inspiring habits of reasoning in frequent and rational conversations.

M. de Buffon distinguishes extremely well between the talent of writing, and the talent of speaking. The latter is of all ages, the former belongs to enlightened times, and pre-supposes cultivation of mind and the exercise of genius. He justly remarks, that those who write as they speak, though they may speak very well, write very ill

Style must be one, and constitute a whole, for every subject is one; however vast it may be, it may be comprehended in a single speech. "Why," says M. de Buffon, "are the works of "nature so perfect?—It is that every work is a "whole, and labours upon an eternal plan from "which it never varies. Nature prepares in silence "the germs of her productions, she sketches by a "single process the primitive form of every living "being, she developes it, she brings it to perfec-"tion, by a continued movement and in a given "time. The work astonishes, but it is the divine

" impression which the features bear that ought " to strike. The human mind cannot create any " thing; what it produces is not till after it has " been fertilised by experience and meditation; " its knowledge is the germ of its productions. " But if it imitate nature in its march and in its " labours, if it arrive by contemplation at the most " sublime truths, if it combine and connect them, " if it form systems by reflection, it will establish " immortal monuments on bases which cannot be " shaken."

M. de Buffon sets out from hence to indicate the principal rocks upon which the reputation of writers is commonly wrecked. It is from a want of plan, from not having sufficiently reflected upon the object he has in view, that a man of talents often finds himself embarrassed and knows not where to begin. He perceives a great number of ideas, but as he has not compared them and separated the leading from the subordinate ones, he cannot determine which to prefer to the other, and he remains in perplexity.

Nothing is more adverse to real warmth than the desire of continually producing striking passages; nothing is more contrary to being luminous, since light ought to be one body and spread itself uniformly over the whole work, than those flashes which are only produced by the shock of words striking against each other; they dazzle for an instant to leave you directly after in perfect darkness.

Nothing, again, is more in opposition to true eloquence than seeking after fine spun thoughts, after ideas that catch at the first glance, but which are unconnected and without consistence,—which, like metal beat very thin, only gain in lustre by losing in solidity. In proportion as this thin tinsel kind of spirit is introduced into a work, in equal proportion must that work be deficient in strength, in clearness, in warmth, unless the spirit in question be of its very essence, and the writer has no other object in view but raillery. In such a case the art of saying little things happily is perhaps more difficult than that of saying great ones. It is very much to be presumed, that M. de Buffon introduced this last reflection for the consolation of 'some among his new brethren, who cannot pretend to any greater honour than that of being among these thin tinsel spirits. The reflection however does not appear just. The art of saying little things is always a very poor and petty art, it belongs to genius alone to say great things, art has nothing to do with it. I would much rather have said one sublime thing in the course of my life, than have printed a dozen volumes of little things. I speak here of those light and frivolous writings which often procure a man the frail and transient reputation of a *bel-esprit*, but whose productions commonly die before him. There is however a sublimity in light raillery which genius knows how to seize, and Molière has scattered many such sublimities even in his farces; there are many of

them also in the farce of *L'Avocat Patelin*. But these do not consist of mere points of light and airy ideas resembling the bubbles of water by which children are amused, and which present a variety of colours without having any solid body; they are strokes of the pencil which escape from the man of genius, and where this is the case, the talent of a Teniers becomes as precious as that of a Raphael; both are a gift of nature which no art or study can ever produce.

M. de Buffon believes that works well written will be the only ones that will descend to posterity. He thinks that abundance of knowledge, singularity of facts and circumstances, the novelty even of discoveries are by no means to be considered as likely to insure immortality. If the works which contain these things run only upon trivial objects, and are written without taste, without genius, without elevation, they will perish, since knowledge, facts, and discoveries are easily transferred, and may gain by being thrown into more able hands, but style cannot be transferred, and if that be added to the other merits, the work must be immortal.

October, 1753.

The fourth volume of M. de Buffon's Natural History appeared two days after his reception into the French Academy. It contains an admirable *Dissertation upon the nature of animals* with the *History of the Horse, the Ass, and the Ox.* This

work is among the small number that certainly will, and that alone ought to descend to posterity. Four years have elapsed since Messrs. de Buffon and Daubenton presented us with the first three volumes which were received with universal applause and delight. When I say *universal*, I certainly reckon as something the *American Letters*, and other miserable pamphlets which a spirit of cavil or envy have brought forward against the immortal work in question. Thanks to the malignity and imbecility of mankind, pamphlets of this kind are become indispensably necessary to the complete success of a work; it cannot be fully established without them. They are the productions, as one of our philosophers observes, in a work which will shortly appear, of men who usurp the title of critics and *beaux-esprits*, and do not blush to resemble those teazing insects that pass the instants of their ephemeral existence in disturbing and annoying mankind, alike at their labours and in their hours of repose. When these insects bite without venom, when envy restrains itself to pamphlets and daily papers, the man of genius despises both the one and the other, and would be ashamed of crushing so contemptible an enemy. But when the bite is venomous, when cabal and calumny find the secret of casting an odium on philosophy, of rendering the morals of the most respectable men suspected, and of endangering their safety and repose, then indignation must and ought to interfere, justice demands that beings so noxious in their nature,

and so unworthy of existence, should be exterminated.

The volume now before us, will sustain in every respect the reputation which its author has already acquired. M. de Buffon has found the secret of rendering his subject particularly interesting. Those who are emulous of writing well, may take his *Dissertations* as models, and consider the author as their master and instructor. One may justly be astonished at reading a treatise of a hundred pages written from the first line to the last with the same grandeur, the same warmth, the same truth, and ornamented throughout with the same brilliancy of colouring. Here we are taught how to descant with dignity upon the most common subjects, and how every thing may be ennobled by a writer who possesses at once clearness and elevation. Here we may learn how to acquire genius and talent, if indeed they are ever to be acquired, for it is in this that the secret of all rules and all precepts principally consists. Here we may learn to feel the beauties and defects of a work, to judge the comparative merits of writers.

The *Dissertation upon the nature of Animals* prefixed to this volume, is one of those choice morsels which cannot be too much read and re-read. It would be useless for this reason to make any extracts from it, but we shall offer some observations upon particular parts; first making the general observation, that we cannot compliment

M. de Buffon too much upon the modesty and justice with which he is careful to qualify his reasonings. This exactness is perhaps one of the most unequivocal marks of a great mind. Never does he give his reasonings as more conclusive than they really are, never does he assume to himself to have demonstrated a thing which he has only shewn to be extremely probable; he is very attentive to ascertain the degree of credulity which he thinks due to his arguments, the exact weight of the evidence he has brought in support of them. It is true that this scrupulousness is almost indispensable in a philosopher whose bold genius often hazards new systems, and invents new hypotheses which cannot be conformable to the tastes and ideas of every body. But how many are there who with more pride than genius, and much more obstinacy than imagination, often give us the most absurd reveries as demonstrations, and are angry if we dare to enquire into them narrowly. It is only a true philosopher, a man of superior genius like M. de Buffon, who is capable of acting with so much ingenuousness, and even guarding us against confounding the degrees of credibility;—who is above the weakness of entertaining too great an affection for his own opinions, and exacting the same deference and respect for them, that priests require revealed truths.

An animal, says M. de Buffon, has two modes of existence, a state of motion, and a state of repose, watching and sleeping; these succeed each

other alternately during the whole course of his life. This contains the whole plan of his dissertation. Such a division appears at first sight ordinary, common, what might have been said by any body; but it is one of those truths which the more simple and luminous they are, the more they belong to true genius alone. Every one is tempted to say, I should have considered the subject under the same point of view; but in reflecting a little, and investigating the admirable system which M. de Buffon has established upon this simple idea, we see plainly that it is one which could only emanate from true genius. Sleep which appears to be a purely passive state, a sort of death, is on the contrary the first state of the living animal, and the very foundation of life. It is not a privation, an annihilation, it is a manner of being, a mode of existence as real, and more general than any other. By sleep does our existence commence; the fœtus in the womb sleeps almost continually, and the child sleeps much more than it remains awake. All that our author says on this subject is admirable.

I have long had a great inclination to write *An Apology for the Passions*, and amplify what the author of the *Philosophical Thoughts* has said in their favour at the beginning of his book. M. de Buffon has treated this part of his subject extremely ill; they have more occasion than ever for an apologist. Unluckily he is right in the ill that he ascribes to them,—they are the great source of all the unhappiness of mankind. "Vio-

" lent passions," says he, " with intervals, are but " paroxysms of madness. Madness is the germ of " misfortune, and it is by wisdom that it is deve- " loped. The greater part of those who call them- " selves unfortunate are men of violent passions, " that is to say madmen, who have some intervals " of reason in which they are sensible of their insa- " nity, and consequently feel themselves unhappy. " Since then there are in all elevated situations " more false desires, more vain pretentions, more " disorderly passions, more abuse of the reasoning " powers than in inferior ranks, it follows that the " great are of all men the least happy."

We have here the smallest part of the ill ascribed by M. de Buffon to the passions, and it cannot be denied that there is a great deal of reason in what he says; but he has forgotten that full as much may be said in their favour. Unhappy passion, or passion in an ill-organized head produces all the evils which our author sets before us; but happy passion, or passion in a well-ordered mind, is the greatest source of happiness given to man. It inspires him with genius, or at least calls it into action; it renders him capable of the most exalted virtues, of the most arduous labours, of the most difficult enterprizes. Without passion our life would be but a continued sleep. All that has been produced in the world the most grand, the most elevated, the most sublime, has been the work of the passions. Besides, supposing it were true that the passions can only be a source of misery

to us, this truth would be even more fatal than the passions themselves; we should be shown how we can disencumber ourselves of the passions; we ought at least to be convinced that the Sage is out of the reach of these ills. The portrait which M. de Buffon draws of the wise man is indeed admirable, but does such a man exist. All that this author says concerning our misfortunes and the deplorable state of human nature, and which alas! is but too true, would lead us naturally to ask of him who made us, *why hast thou made us thus?* if we had not been strictly interdicted this question by St. Paul. I shall say then of the passions what our author says of sleep, it is a mode of existence as essential to man as reason, or the understanding, and all the invectives against the passions are no better founded than the complaints of those who regret the third, or the quarter of their lives which they are obliged to spend in sleep.

Gladly would we analyse very minutely what our author says on love, but that would carry us too far. It is a morsel no less admirably written than the rest. O love! why dost thou form the happiness of all other beings and the misery of man?—It is, says M. de Buffon that the physical part of this passion alone is really good, and in spite of what enthusiastic votaries may assert, the moral is an evil.—Well, then, at the risk of passing for an enthusiast, I must say, that the moral part of this passion is precisely the most delicious, the most desirable part of our existence, what gives us

so much preference over other animals. I appeal to all who have felt this delicious intoxication of love. What state can be compared to that of true ineffable happiness in love?—to that delightful sympathy of hearts in which the existence of each seems confounded with that of the other, where one becomes as it were a part of the other, sharing the same sentiments, the same joys, the same cares. This delicious state which can only be felt, and of which words can give no idea, is the moral part of love, and is far, very far from vanity. It is true that man has often contrived to carry his petty vanities into love as every where else, has found the secret of poisoning the pleasures of love as of every other sentiment. That does not however prevent the sentiment being good in itself, and calculated to render man happy. There are privileged souls who enjoy in this way the utmost delights of love, and of all other sentiments without their being poisoned by the little vanities, the vices, or any other of the scourges of mankind. If M. de Buffon's mode of reasoning were good, it might easily be proved that not only the moral part of love is an evil, but that the case is the same in every other respect with the moral part of man's nature, since men will often carry their petty vanities and vices, even into their most virtuous actions.

I must farther remark that what our author says upon disgust to life, upon attachment to inanimate objects, upon the talent of imitating

and counterfeiting, upon enthusiasts and romancers with regard to insects, is incomparable. With regard to the latter he asks: "Which is likely "to have the most sublime ideas of the Supreme "Being, the man who sees in him the Creator of "the Universe, who contemplates him establishing the order of every species of existence, "founding every part of nature upon laws invariable and perpetual?—or he who sees him "only engaged in conducting a republic of flies, "and exceedingly occupied with the manner in "which a beetle's wing may best be folded?"—I should say that both may have an equally grand idea of the Creator. To such a Being it can have cost no more to arrange the machinery of the immense Universe than that of a little fly. But the true difference between the two species of philosophers seems to be this; that the mind of the Insectologist from being continually occupied with his little people is insensibly contracted, till in the end he sees nothing but flies and ants in the creation; instead of which he who dares measure the dimensions of the globe, and contemplate the Universe entire, finds his soul every day become more and more elevated till he partakes as it were with the Creator the glory of having created.

November, 1753.

In order to render these pages worthy of some attention and deserving the approbation of

those who condescend to read them, we shall endeavour to employ some, as opportunities are presented, in treating of the works that come under our examination, in giving a sketch, slight it is true, but just and exact, of the present state of literature in France. We shall avail ourselves for this purpose of a season which is commonly the most barren of any in new publications, the court being at Fontainebleau, and all the principal inhabitants of Paris being dispersed about at their country seats. Thus the authors and their heralds the booksellers, are in the habit of resting for a while on their oars that when the Carnival recals every body to the Capital they may renew their labour with redoubled ardour, and obtain, the one a more ample portion of renown, and the other a more extensive sale for their wares. This sketch of French literature once given, will spare us in the sequel many explanations and elucidations, that we should otherwise be obliged to give at every moment, in order to make ourselves understood, but which would be superfluous when the general state of things is once known. The security promised to our communications requires on our part the most unbounded frankness, and the love of truth requires the severest justice as an indispensable duty. Nor shall our friends have any reason to complain of this rigid sincerity. Criticism, which has no other object in view but truth, and which is not animated by the reprehensible desire of finding that bad which is really

good, may be erroneous, and may sometimes reduce its author to the necessity of retracting opinions, but it never can offend any reasonable person.

Among the pamphlets which have appeared within the last few months the *Letter from the Parliament of Provence to the King* is the only one which appears to merit particular attention. This letter is so much the more forcible, as it is written with great moderation, and does not make use of any violent expressions. A person of great discernment remarked upon it that in the *Remonstrances* of the other Parliaments the Jansenists took upon them to assume the theologians; in this the Molinists assumed the magistrates. It might have been added that the latter was done with all the prudence all the moderation, all the dignity that belongs to the most respectable magistrates; we see clearly that theirs is not a fanaticism proceeding only from petty heads, it is by the love of order, by a desire of upholding the laws that they are animated. They will only obey the King, they refuse to receive the law from seditious and fanatical priests. "What we have laid before "your Majesty," they say, "demonstrates plainly "that the Bull is enforced as the rule of faith and "that those who refuse to subscribe to it, are pur-"sued as heretics. All the acts that have emanated "from your authority condemn both these princi-"ples and their effects. It is of the utmost im-"portance that this diversity of principles shou'd

" be put an end to, either by the abrogation of " your regulations, which if necessary would be " glorious, or by maintaining them with the " utmost firmness. It is certain, sire, that the " numerous refusals of the sacraments, occasion " very heavy complaints;—on the part of your " Majesty therefore either the most marked cen- " sure of such refusals or the most decided appro- " bation of them is indispensably requisite."

The third volume of the Encyclopedia has at length appeared. All Europe has been witness to the outcry raised against this important work, and by all reasonable people it has been witnessed with the utmost indignation. What man of common sense could indeed see with indifference the hatreds, the jealousies, the cabals raised against it by persons assuming a false devotion, covering their bad passions with the cloak of religion. Can one refrain from blushing for human nature when we see the religion of the Prince himself made use of to serve the ends of these people; when we see the administrators ready to lend their assistance to the odious plots formed by a false zeal, or perhaps by hypocrisy, to involve the best heads, the most enlarged geniuses of the nation in an unjust and detestable persecution. Unfortunately for the Jesuits it was not so easy to find men capable of continuing the Encyclopedia, as to ruin a set of philosophers who had no other support in the world but their love of truth

and the consciousness of the purity of their motives; poor resources against those who have the power in their hands and who, exposed to false insinuations, to impositions, to rocks without number, have a thousand means of being unjust, while a single one only remains of being just.

All was well concerted, the papers of M. Diderot were seized; it was thus that the Jesuits reckoned upon unmaking an Encyclopedia already concluded; it was thus that they hoped to arrogate to themselves the glory of such an undertaking by arranging and putting in order the articles which they believed all prepared. But they had forgotten to take away from the philosopher his head and his genius, and obtain from him the key to a great many articles which, far from comprehending, they endeavoured in vain to decypher. This humiliation is the only vengeance obtained by our philosophers over enemies no less imbecile than malevolent; if in any case the humiliation of enemies so contemptible can be flattering to philosophers. The government was obliged, not without some sort of confusion, to take measures to engage M. Diderot and M. d'Alembert to resume a work vainly attempted by people who had for a long time been in the lowest ranks of literature. I say, not without some sort of confusion, since the government made these advances to the authors to continue the work, without revoking the decrees issued against it three months before. It ought not

however to have cost any thing to men, to acknowledge that they had been deceived, still less to princes, who are a hundred times more exposed to being deceived than any others. An error is no wrong as soon as it is acknowledged, and as it is impossible to guard ourselves entirely against errors, no humiliation ought to be felt in acknowledging and endeavouring to repair them. It is then a weakness not to acknowledge our errors, and to wish to prevent wrongs without avowing them. A man of superior mind says, *I have been deceived*, well-assured that he shall not be deceived often, nor for a long time. The government then ought for its own glory to have conquered this sort of false shame, and before it entered on any negociations for continuing the Encyclopedia to have revoked without hesitation the edict intended to blast this work;—one which does so much honour not only to our own nation but to all Europe, and to the century which has given it birth.

Such are the leading features of what has passed relative to the suppression and re-establishment of the Encyclopedia. The authors assure us that all these embranglements far from injuring the work have only contributed towards rendering it more perfect. In the former volumes we had no plates, and with the third, which is just published, much greater pains have been taken; the authors have indeed devoted so much time and application to perfecting the different articles that

though they may hope to equal they can never expect to surpass them in subsequent volumes. Many articles with which the public seemed dissatisfied in the former parts are here re-written; of this number is *Jurisprudence*, a science, says M. d'Alembert, so very necessary, and unfortunately so little understood; M. Boucher d'Argis charged himself with the revision of this, which he has executed to the satisfaction of every body. Under the same description may be included *Chymistry, Pharmacy, Physiology, Medicine;* with these M. Venel the younger, a physician and a man of great talents, and the Baron d'Holbach charged themselves. We must also mention several articles by the Chevalier Jaucourt, as well upon the above subjects, as upon physics in general. Notwithstanding such an union of talents the work is probably yet far from perfection; there may still be many things very defective, many errors may be found that must be corrected; and those who seek less for taste and philosophy than for quotations will above all have fine sport. But when I say that this undertaking does the highest honour to the human mind, the principal point of view under which I consider it, is the philosophic spirit universally spread over it,—the profound views of things, the new ideas every where to be met with. The Encyclopædia will be above all things precious to posterity from the very great part taken in it by M. Diderot. This genius, perhaps one of the most fertile, the most extraordinary, that ever existed,

always creating, always new in its operations, has carried into all the philosophic part, into the arts and trades, in which he has been the principal labourer, that illumination, that prodigious fecundity, which characterises all his works. The articles done by him are those the study of which should more especially be recommended to persons capable of reflection, and of perceiving in them the germs of an infinity of ideas which only want to be developed in order to enlighten mankind, and to carry the arts, sciences, and philosophy, to their utmost perfection.

This third volume is preceded by an advertisement which occupies four leaves. It is written entirely by M. d'Alembert, and with much spirit strength, and warmth. That philosopher has undertaken the mathematical part of the work; and under this title shares, with M. Diderot, the glory and the labour attendant upon it. In his advertisement he speaks in the name of himself and his colleague. You will find many things very affecting, and which ought to render the situation of men of letters particularly interesting and respectable to us; the Jesuits will probably not be much pleased with it, any more than with the list of errata at the end.

Jean Jaques Rousseau, of Geneva, whom his friends call *The Citizen* for distinction, the eloquent and atrabilarious adversary of the sciences, has just set all Paris in a flame by a *Letter upon Music*, in

which he endeavours to prove that it is impossible to adapt music to French words, that the language is altogether unadapted to musical sounds, that the French never have had any national music, and never can have any. It is singular enough to see this opinion maintained by a man who has himself composed a great deal of music to French words, and has recently brought out *Le Devin du Village*, a very pleasing interlude, which has had the greatest success, both at Fontainebleau and at Paris. This Letter has not made less noise here than was made a year ago by *The Little Prophet of Boehmischbroda**; but *This Little Prophet* made every body laugh, and the French can pardon any thing on that ground; whereas *the Citizen* reasons, and overthrows with mighty strokes of the hatchet all the altars which had been raised with so much respect to the *Genius of French Music*. It were much to be wished that some man capable of entering the lists against so seductive a writer as M. Rousseau would take up the pen in answer; or if unfortunately *the Citizen* is in the right, it were better that a total silence should be observed. But the same thing will happen again that has often happened already; petty scribblers will take the

* This was probably one of those ephemeral productions of which M. de Grimm makes such frequent mention. It is a work now no longer known; if the *little prophet* did for a while find *honour in his own country*, that day has long been passed, and neither himself nor his prophecies are any longer thought of. In a future part of the corsespondence some allusion however is again made to him.—*Translator.*

matter up, and we shall have showers of wretched pamphlets pouring in upon us from all quarters.

It is said that the King of England has demanded the head of the Bishop of Montauban. He was answered, that the Bishop had no head; and his Majesty in consequence has desisted from any further demands.

January, 1754.

We have just received from Holland *An Essay on General History, from the time of Charlemagne to Charles the Fifth*, by M. de Voltaire, 2 vols. 12mo. printed at the Hague. This is a new theft from the same illustrious author, and he will probably be extremely vexed at it. In reading the work no doubt can be entertained that it is from his pen, but it is obvious at the same time that what is now given is only the first sketch of a grand picture which requires much attention, much correction, much application, before it is finished, and in a proper state to meet the public eye. But though in its present state it scarcely deserves the name of a work, wholly unfinished as it is, you will find every where strokes which characterize the style of the first and most astonishing writer of the nation. He considers Chronology and the order of succession of kings as the guides of a historian not as the end to be attained by his labours. An observation made by him upon the Koran is very striking, and appears very just. "We find

"every where," says he, "a profound ignorance "even of the most simple and most known laws "of physics: this is the true touchstone of books "which false religions pretend to have been writ-"ten by the hand of the Deity. God cannot be "either absurd or ignorant; but the vulgar, who "do not see these faults, worship them, and the "learned employ a torrent of abuse to palliate "them."—Our author calls the finances the pulse of a State, a very fine and very just comparison. He speaks of the origin of the law, regarded as a profession, and repeats a mistake into which he has fallen in his *Age of Louis the Fourteenth*, in saying that the descendants of persons of the law are not yet received into the chapters in Germany. He does not here pay attention to the circumstance that no distinction is made in Germany between the nobility of the gown and the nobility of the sword, and that great families may enter indiscriminately into both professions. Persons of the law are not received into the chapters in Germany if they are *roturiers* by birth, but they are when they can prove their nobility. In France the nobility of the gown is essentially different from the nobility of the sword. M. de Voltaire will no doubt be reproached again, as he has been already, on account of his *History of the Crusades*, with a secret attachment to the Mahometan religion; he certainly says all that can be urged in its defence at the expense of Christianity. The wits have amused themselves with circulating a report that

the author is going to Constantinople to be circumcised.

A seat recently vacated at the Academy by the death of M. Gros de Boze has been filled by the election of the Count de Clermont, a prince of the blood. M. de Bougainville, secretary to the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres, mentioned before as contesting the seat when M. de Buffon was elected, a man no less celebrated in Paris for his cabals and the perpetual quarrels in which he is engaged than other men of letters are for their literary productions, thought himself on this occasion sure of his election. So thought the public too, and were indignant at it. On the day of election, the voices being ready in general to declare in his favour, Marshal Richelieu, seated by the side of the President Hénault, asked him to whom he should give his vote?—To M. Bougainville, said the President.—I will lay you a wager not, said the Marshal.—The President, astonished that another should know better than himself to whom he intended giving his vote, said to the Marshal, *you are making a jest of me.*—The Marshal insisted upon what he had advanced, and this singular debate lasted some time, till M. de Mirabaud, secretary to the Academy, drew from his pocket a letter from the Count de Clermont, in which this prince returned thanks to the Academy for the honour done him in electing him to the vacant seat. Although the Academy had never thought of offering the place to a prince of the blood-royal,

all the votes were immediately united in favour of one who had expressed his readiness to accept it. M. de Richelieu won his wager, and the public appeared much better satisfied at seeing in the Academy a prince who loves literature and the arts than a man who does not seem born either for the one or the other.

We are already at the second edition of Rousseau's letter upon French music. Never did a quarrel make more noise, nor ever was one carried on with greater eagerness than that which has arisen on this subject, and the pamphlet in question has revived it with even greater eagerness than ever. There has appeared, and will still appear, legions of answers in which the author is attacked with all sorts of abuse, totally foreign to the question. The orchestra of the opera has burnt him in effigy. This body which thinks itself composed of the first musicians in the world, and which is only the first in Paris, because there is no other, as was humourously said in a pamphlet last year, this body has taken the greatest offence at being charged with ignorance and imbecility. But what is difficult to be believed, yet is not the less perfectly true, is, that the author was near being exiled for his offences. It would have been singular enough to have seen Jean Jaques Rousseau thus stigmatized for decrying French music, after having been suffered to treat some of the most delicate subjects in politics in his own way with impunity; to have seen the *Citizen of Geneva*, the enemy of the arts, take his stick and

march out of Paris, shaking the dust from off his feet, for having preached the gospel of Italian music. Be this as it may, the great Chevalier de Mouhy, who, according to his own testimony, only yields the palm in writing to M. de Voltaire, has just published *A Justification of French Music, against the accusations of a German and an Allobroge;* in spite of it, however, the *bouffons* continue to perform, and have recently brought out an interlude, entitled, *Bertholdas at Court,* which has been still more applauded than any of the former. It is difficult to foresee how the quarrel may finish, and the public is much more occupied with it than with the Royal Chamber and its proceedings. It may be added, that reasonable people in general do not approve the tone of Rousseau's letter; when any one has good reasons to give, he seldom has recourse to invectives.

It is about three years ago that the citizen of Geneva published his celebrated speech, written for the academy at Dijon, in which he undertakes to prove that literature and the arts and sciences, far from contributing to refine and purify the morals, have always been a fruitful source of corruption to a country. This speech, crowned by the academy to which it was addressed, is written with a strength and ardour never before seen in a paper of the kind; it made a very great sensation at Paris, and laid the foundation of its author's reputation; before this, Rousseau's writings were very little known. Among the great numbers who took up

the pen in defence of letters and the arts, it is much to be regretted that not one proved himself equal to pleading the cause he had undertaken to support. Any one who ventured to enter the lists against Rousseau, should have thought only of opposing to his powerful eloquence, plain, clear, and logical reasoning. This was the proper weapon to employ against so formidable an enemy; the only one with which he could be conquered; but unfortunately this was the only one not employed. I shall only notice two of the numerous adversaries to Rousseau, who came forwards on this occasion. Stanislaus, king of Poland, published some very sensible remarks upon the speech, but somewhat irrelevant to the subject.* M. Bordes of the Academy of Sciences and Belles Lettres at Lyons, printed *A Dissertation upon the Advantages of the Arts and Sciences,* which gained more credit at Paris, than in my opinion, it deserves. It is somewhat in the same case with the Polish king's remarks: it is feebly written; the thoughts are feeble, and not applicable to the question. Rousseau had the advantage too much on his side to draw back. He wrote first an answer to Stanislaus, and then to M. Bordes, which he says is to be his last. Both contain some strokes really sublime; the last is, in my opinion, equal, or even superior to the original speech itself. M. Bordes has not, however,

* This *Dissertation* is among the works of King Stanislaus, published in French, in four small volumes, under the title of *Oeuvres du Philosophe Bienfaisant.* Translator.

judged proper to abandon the cause; he gave us some months ago, *A second Dissertation upon the advantages of the Arts and Sciences,* in which he endeavours to repair the new breaches which his formidable adversary had made in these fabricks. But this second attempt, which is undoubtedly full as good as his first, has not made any impression at Paris, for this plain reason, that a great majority of the good Parisians grow tired of any discussion of the kind after a while; they lose all interest in any subject which has been long dwelt upon.

Rousseau, therefore, at present, remains master of the field of battle, not, as I think, on account of the goodness of his cause, but because no adversary has arisen capable of supporting the contest with him. He has even had the satisfaction of seeing the question touched upon by M. d'Alembert, both in his *Preface to the Encyclopedia,* and in his two volumes of *Miscellanies of Literature,* published at the beginning of last year; in both he may have remarked that this celebrated philosopher's opinions are not very remote from his own. The question, however, remains still undecided; for, although M. Rousseau has said many admirable things we can never allow that the logic of his reasoning is of sufficient force, or sufficiently established to sanction us in adopting his system; it is very much to be regretted that none of our principal philosophers have thought of taking up the question, since it is undoubtedly a grand and important one. By investigating it thoroughly, by examining

it in every possible point of view, with regard to the corruption of morals imputed to the arts and sciences, to their influence in promoting virtue and vice; in thus treating the subject and every thing relating to it in a sound and logical manner, it appears to me that the *Citizen of Geneva* might easily have been brought to his *ne plus ultra.* The abuse of the arts and sciences has undoubtedly occasioned much evil in the world; but how are such abuses to be prevented? Is it in forbidding man the use of every thing which may possibly be perverted by him? At this rate, what is there that might not be prohibited, since I know of nothing that may not be abused; man must then be converted into a brute, or even into an inanimate being. Besides, how would it be possible to prevent men applying themselves to the arts and sciences, that is, according to our philosopher, corrupting themselves. We know very well, that this hangs upon a thousand trivial circumstances, upon a thousand chances that no human power or prudence can change or controul. It is useless, therefore, to argue upon a thing over which we really have no power, which may be called one of the modes of existence of man. To prove that a nation is wrong in giving admission to literature and the arts, is something like attempting to prove that a man is in the wrong to die.

There is another mode of combating the opinions of M. Rousseau, which is connected with the first, and which appears to me also perfectly philosophic; it is to shew him that he has not penetrated to the

true source of the unhappiness of mankind. Reading over again the other day the admirable *Dissertation upon the nature of Animals*, prefixed by M. de Buffon to the fourth volume of his *Natural History*, which I had the honour of mentioning at the time when it appeared; I was tempted to place man in the forest upon *all-fours* by the side of the hare. On a sudden a violent storm came on, which was rendered still more terrific by the extreme darkness of the night; the thunder rolled, the lightning filled the air, at intervals, with an awful and momentary light, spreading alarm and horror over the two animals I had placed together. At length, mild and calm weather succeeded; the clouds dispersed, the sun rose, and nature resumed its customary beauty and tranquillity. I saw my hare, already forgetting the horrors of the night, occupied only with enjoying the freshness which the storm had spread over the earth, and which the sun rendered still more reviving, while the man, sad, thoughtful, uneasy, totally unmindful of the present good, was only occupied with devising the means of securing himself in future against the horrors to which he had so recently been exposed. This was sufficient; I had already seen enough not to be astonished at finding this man, already erect upon his two feet, make use of his powers of speech, turn his thoughts to building houses, and at length towns, to cultivating the arts and sciences in every way. To accomplish these things, a succession of time

only is requisite, and time is a commodity never exhausted.

If the sciences are pernicious to man they undoubtedly ought not to be cultivated, but if man be not allowed to cultivate them, he ought not to have the gift of speech; if deprived of that, he ought not to have the power of reflecting, he ought not to have any ideas of virtue and vice, he ought, in fine, to be wholly deprived of his moral nature. But the faculty of reflecting, which, properly speaking, is the source of all our ills, is essential to man, he must be something else than man if he had not that faculty. It is evident that M. Rousseau confounds the state of man with that of the brute; the state of the latter is uniform and immutable, that of the former is from his very constitution, liable to perpetual changes which no philosopher can alter or regulate.

M. Nivelle de La Chaussée, the author of several comedies, is just dead, by no means at an advanced age, and has vacated a seat in the Academy. *The Prejudice in Fashion*, *The Melanie*, and other works printed by him are well known in the world; his *False Antipathy* was played not long since and received with considerable applause. This gentleman is considered, in France, as the inventor of a new species of comedy, which has been called, in derision, *Weeping Comedy*. He is, however, no more the inventor of

it than I am, since it was well known to the ancients. Introduced into the Theatres, at Paris, it has had the fate of most novelties, and found numerous partisans as well as numerous adversaries. But since it is almost impossible not to go astray when we set out, at first, upon a false principle, and since the farther and the quicker we proceed, the more astray we are likely to get, it may be said, with truth, that the public, and even persons of great weight in the literary world, confounding the species of drama with the writers, have never hitherto passed a solid and reasonable judgment upon it. Let us endeavour to give a clear view of our ideas on the subject.

Comedy is a picture of life put into action. As this picture often brings before us actions highly ridiculous, it has been established as a first and incontestable principle, that whatever does not excite a laugh at the expence of some of the vices and absurdities of mankind, does not belong to the department of comedy. This prejudice has been established more firmly, since the greatest comic writer of this, or perhaps any nation, the sublime Molière, has confined himself in his pieces to the ridiculous parts of the human character. His successors have been emulous of interesting us, of exciting our sympathy, even of calling forth our tears in their comedies. But since they had neither the genius nor pencil of Molière, as they did not know, like him, the avenues of the human heart, yet were not so destitute of talents as to be

wholly unsuccessful, the species of drama has been confounded with the writers, and the faults of the latter have been imputed to the former. Such is our present situation with regard to comedy. "Every species is good," says M. de Voltaire, "excepting the *ennuyeux*. Why should the species, to which the name of *Weeping Comedy* has been given, not be good, since there are scenes in the *Arrogant Man*, in the *Wedded Philosopher*, in the *Prejudice in Fashion*, in *Melanie*, and many other pieces very affecting, and which produce a great effect in representation. If that effect be certain and indisputable in any one of these scenes alone, what should prevent whole pieces in the same style being equally so, and if there be none, does not the fault lie in the poets by whom they have been written? M. Destouches may, with reason, be reproached with being often cold and languid in his mode of writing, and with having sought to introduce contrasts into his pieces even to a degree of puerility. Now nature only here and there produces very striking contrasts; it is a resource of art, of which the artist makes the greater or the less use, according to the greater or less extent of his genius. M. de La Chaussée may still more justly be reproached with never having known how to lay the plan of a reasonable comedy, or to arrange and conduct any of his pieces properly; with having mixed all the different species together, with having written the greater part of his comedies very ill, with having introduced a

great many scenes merely to fill up the piece, and bring on, at the end, either naturally, or by force, an interesting situation. Some of these faults may not unjustly be imputed to *Nanine*, and to the *Prodigal Son*; the authors of both may be reproached with having written novels rather than comedies, with having conceived that want of genius might be supplied, by devising interesting situations, the result of a succession of romantic adventures. This last reproach applies extremely to *Cenia*, a piece by Madame de Graffigny which has had the most brilliant success at Paris.

But, among all these reproaches, there is not one which bears upon the species of drama. The greater part of Terence's comedies are interspersed with affecting scenes, which arise out of very natural events, and are perfectly conformable with the manners of those times. May we not say that, if the writers who have attempted this species had been blessed with the talents of Molière, they would have seized and delineated faithfully the true and the sublime, forming an interesting picture, with no less skill than his master has drawn his comic scenes. Instead of devising extravagant adventures they would have drawn their scenes and situations from their subject itself, and from the characters of their personages; in one word, they would have made perfect pieces, and we should never have declaimed against a species from which we had received such pleasure in the representation. What M. Marmontel has said in the third volume

of the Encyclopedia upon comedy, is well done, but I think he has not, by any means, exhausted the subject. I can conceive a species of comedy much more *tragic*, if the term may be allowed, than the *Weeping Comedy*. Why, for instance, should not a *gambler* or a *prodigal* kill himself, at the end of the piece, in one of those paroxysms of despair and phrenzy to which such misconduct very commonly leads. Such a comedy, well conducted, would be more in nature than the greater part of our tragedies, and I am disposed to think that it would produce a very striking effect.*

It is sometimes said that our masters and predecessors have done every thing, and left us nothing to do; that Molière has exhausted every subject for comedy, that he has forestalled us in every thing. Nothing can be more false. If he have robbed us, the *Metromania* of Piron would say, let us, in our turn, rob posterity. The talent of a comic writer consists less in the choice of characters, the number of which is limited, than in the art of seizing them and delineating their finest and most delicate shadings. The shadings of charac-

* M. Saurin has executed this idea in the drama of *Beverly*, which is always acted with great applause.—*French Editor.*

It appears a very singular idea to give this drama the appellation of a *Comedy*, even of a *Weeping*, or, as we should say, *Sentimental Comedy*. The French piece, *Beverly*, is taken from the English tragedy of the *Gamester*, and is indeed called, in a copy of it in the Translator's hands, *Tragedie Bourgeoise*, or a *Domestic Tragedy*, and this seems a much more appropriate appellation. Not a single feature of comedy is to be found throughout the piece.—*Translator.*

ter then are infinite. A man who should arise at this moment, with the genius of Molière, would discover materials for writing as many pieces, and pieces no less admirable than those of his divine predecessor, without finding himself incommoded or forestalled.

Much has been said with regard to the morality of theatrical pieces, and many advocates for the theatre, more zealous than clear-sighted, have fancied that it might be made a great school of morality. It was not difficult for their adversaries to shew them some very excellent pieces in which no moral was to be found, or, if any, not a very good one. But, if every picture which represents virtue unrewarded or vice happy be reprehensible and dangerous, we must abjure painting and all the fine arts, we must relinquish the study of history, we must no longer live among men; for what is there more common in actual life than to see virtue become the victim of crimes. The drama ought to represent men such as they are, with all their passions, their virtues, their vices, and their wanderings. If the picture be well sketched the piece is good; the merit of such representations is not to edify, they are intended to form the taste, to excite sensibility, to enlighten and instruct us. The Romans gave the people bloody shows of gladiators to familiarize them with the horrors of war; the system of our government being to soften the character of the people, to render them humane and compassionate, there are no means more

certain for accomplishing this purpose than to excite their sympathy as much as possible, to present them with frequent occasions of shedding tears. This is what I consider as the principal advantage resulting from our tragedies. I read, not long ago, the preface which Baron Bielfield, a German, has put at the head of a collection of his comedies. After reading that, I must confess that I had not the courage to read half a scene of one of his pieces. It is impossible to write more nonsensically upon the subject we have just been discussing than he does. The Abbé de Voisenon too wrote not much amiss on the score of absurdity, upon the same subject, in the preface to a collection of his comedies published last year, at Paris.

M. de Bougainville is, at length, elected a member of the French Academy, in the place of M. de La Chaussée. His example shews that perseverance and courage in prosecuting intrigues and cabals, are often more sure modes of succeeding ultimately, than perseverance in virtue and good actions.

May, 1754.

Among the literary novelties of the present moment is a *History of the Peace of Nimeguen*, in 2 volumes, 8vo. The author, whose name I do not know, published, some time ago, a *History of the Treaty of the Pyrenees*, and he appears to have the project of giving us, in succession, pictures of

all the treaties which have been, by turns, concluded and broken by the different powers of Europe since the Peace of Westphalia. Although this latter treaty was the basis of all that have followed, our author has not judged proper to write its history, not daring to enter the lists against the work of Father Bougeant, which is so much known and so universally esteemed. The *History of the Treaty of Nimeguen*, though long and dry, is not without merit; it must be acknowledged, however, that its merit diminishes the more it is examined, and the more one considers the important question of the true mode of studying and writing history. This is a point touched by our author, in his preface, where he endeavours to justify the plan and method of his own undertaking. But, instead of solving the question, he complains of some journalists who have not spoken favourably of his *Treaty of the Pyrennees*. For my part, as I am less difficult than they, I will grant him, in the first place that, if the book sells well, and contributes to the ease and comfort of the author, there is no great harm in having compiled it; as for the rest, I am inclined to think that it is of no other use but to swell the numerous and useless collections of those who buy books not to read them.

A very fine work might certainly be composed, on the manner of writing and studying history. This subject though it has already been often treated, appears still to be extremely deficient in that

light and precision, which true philosophy spreads over all matters that it investigates deeply. Merely comparing the ancient historians with the moderns, and observing the sensible difference there is between them, ought to enable us to treat the question properly, and I propose here to throw together none of the principles which, in my opinion, ought to be established in the work suggested. It is astonishing that having acknowledged the ancients as our masters in every way, and having only succeeded as far as we have followed their steps, that is to say, followed the laws of nature and of truth, we have undertaken to write history in a manner so different from theirs. It is useless to remark that we have no names to oppose to those of Livy, Thucydides, Polybius, Sallust, and more especially Tacitus and Plutarch. All the merit of our most celebrated historians, consists in the petty talent of endeavouring to establish facts little interesting in themselves, and the truth or falshood of which no one could establish with any certainty, without having been an eye-witness of them. The ancients wrote only the history of their own times, and of their own people; theirs are not the details of the actions of kings, of battles, of treaties, and the like: it is the history of men and manners that has engaged their pens. A fact is only interesting, as it serves to develope characters; a king only merits the attention of a historian, inasmuch as he is a hero and a man. Without these essential qualities kings and facts have no right to a place in history; it

is in annals, in almanacks, that they should be preserved, as chronological data, to contribute towards forming materials for universal history. If this rule be dictated by reason, what will become of our sketchers of portraits, of battles, and of treaties, who give us details of events, as if they had passed under their own eyes. All that can interest, for example, in the account of a campaign, is to know whether the battle was won or lost, and what were the consequences of it; a matter which is never doubtful. If it has been directed by a man of very superior genius, it merits being detailed, but it is then no longer the history of the battle, it becomes that of the man. When the question is then to display the plan and conduct of a battle, it is for those who were on the spot, for persons of the profession to relate what they have seen; or if the question be to give the account of a negociation, it is for those who have assisted in arranging and putting in order the chaos, to record it in their memoirs. For us, if we are interested to know the bottom of things, we must play the part of judges, examine the evidence given by the different witnesses, reconcile the real or apparent contradictions, and bring forth the truth from amidst the clouds in which it has been enveloped by the passions, by bad faith, by prepossessions, by prejudice, by error, in short, the inseparable companion of man.

If even it were permitted to our makers of histories, to write the details of treaties and battles

they would only with still stronger reason, be liable to the imputation of not knowing either the manner of setting about the details, or the method to be adopted in pursuing them. The good method, and there is only one, is not to make out of twelve volumes in which the same fact is recorded, a thirteenth, but to be occupied with what every reader who has a little common sense might be, and with what the person who sums up a suit is obliged to be, viz. with examining and comparing the testimonies on which each fact is supported, and drawing such conclusions as may establish the truth upon a solid and permanent basis. But even supposing this to have been done with all possible accuracy and penetration, I should not yet consider the person as meriting the title of a historian.

It will perhaps be said, this is, however, at any rate, better than treating frivolous subjects; to such a reflection, I shall answer, yes, if you were condemned by a *lettre-de-cachet* to write; but there remains a third part to take, which is to be silent. Why cannot authors shew the same kind of respect to the public that every sensible man does to a circle in society? When he has nothing to say, he holds his tongue and listens to others. At the present moment when history presents us with such an immense field, which may be travelled over with great advantage, nothing remains but to have recourse to the path of *Chronological Abridgements*. In these convenient and useful compilations may be arranged a list of those men, and a sketch of those

facts, which, when they are past, have no other merit to us than as they serve in the light of points for measuring time, and the revolutions it brings about. It is from the *heaps*, if I may be allowed to use such a word, that we must extract, after the example of the ancients, those events which have changed the face of the earth, and the destinies of its inhabitants; the histories of those men, who by their genius, their virtues, or their singularities, have merited the homage, or the attention of mankind. Under the first head, we shall be presented from among the immense collections of memoirs and anecdotes with which we are inundated, such only as are worth preserving; under the second, we shall have a history of the manners and the characters of different ages, of the arts, and all other labours of the human mind. These are the only subjects worthy the attention of a great writer, of a reflecting and elevated genius, and the study of rational men; such details would have a real charm for our youth, who find the greatest *ennui* in the *History of the Four great Monarchies.*

It belongs then properly to philosophers alone to write history; it is not kings, merely as such, but great men, such as have been remarkable in any way, that ought to occupy its pages. It is from having adopted these principles, that we find Plutarch superior to all other historians, Homer to all other poets, and Raphaël to all other painters. 'Tis from having followed these principles, that I find the *History of Charles the Twelfth of Sweden*, so ad-

mirable. The character of this hero, remarkable in itself, is there treated in a manner truly bold, easy, original, I might almost add, romantic; all this was necessary to give a true picture of Charles the Twelfth, and all this will be amply found in the enchanting pen of his historian. Notwithstanding this, for twenty years past, little minds have never ceased to cavil at this delightful morsel. They could not comprehend that we had no occasion for them, or for M. de Voltaire, to inform us that Charles lost the battle of Pultowa, and that in order to prove the work rather a romance than a history, it was not sufficient to cite some little facts, the veracity of which might be questioned, it was necessary to prove that the historian had not given the essential shadings of his hero's character, or that he had given false ones; that he had represented him, in short, any thing rather than what he was; that in fact, he had wholly failed in his subject.

Formerly, Louis the Fourteenth, according to the advice of M. Colbert, sought out persons of merit, all over Europe, in order to heap his favours upon them. At the present moment, a great king finds them out himself, without having recourse to the eyes of a Colbert: the king of Prussia has just given a pension of twelve hundred livres per annum, to M. d'Alembert.

July, 1754.

I must not omit offering some remarks upon the *Happy Orphans*, a novel by M. Crebillon the

younger, although it is a subject which gives me no less embarrassment than concern. This author has hitherto enjoyed a very high reputation, and has been often cited, I think, with reason, as among the select few who know how to write. His productions have a character of perfect originality, and bear the impression of a genius, lively, easy, pleasant, full of grace, of attic wit, and point. He has also, in my opinion, a just claim to the honour of having created in some sort the species of novel in which he excells; or if he be not absolutely the creator of it, no one can deny him the credit of having carried it to the utmost perfection it seems capable of obtaining.

The species, however, requires much apology; good morals form no part of its character; frivolity, raillery, licentiousness, are its prevailing features. Let us be candid and sincere; from the insipid *Grigri* to the execrable *Grelot*, the last thing of the kind with which we have been presented, there is not one of this species that ought not, for the honour and glory of the nation, to be burnt; especially as it is a species which belongs to the French alone. The only pens from which these kind of novels are at all supportable, are those of the Count de Hamilton and M. de Crebillon. All our petty *beaux-esprits*, who have adopted the mode with so much eagerness, have only convinced us that they know perfectly well how to combine profound insipidity with great licentiousness. Between the celebrated writers above-mentioned, a

pleasing and interesting comparison might be drawn. The Count de Hamilton is almost always original; he has a great deal of wit and gaiety, great warmth of style, and great fertility, or perhaps I should rather say, great extravagance of imagination; he has moreover a talent which I consider as very singular, that of interesting, and even affecting his readers in the most extravagant and impertinent fictions. M. Crebillon possesses the above talents perhaps in a less degree, but he has one immense advantage over his predecessor, in a very nice and happy pencil, in the inappreciable art of seizing and sketching the minute traits which more particularly stamp the character, and giving all the ridicule of which it is capable, with a singular truth and address. I consider his *Sopha* as a *chef-d'œuvre* in its kind. Of all the works of fancy with which I am acquainted, it is perhaps the only one that I am never tired of reading. In this novel, besides some very interesting situations, the conversation between Mazuhlim and Zulica, and afterwards of Narses who mingles in it, appears to me one of those *friandises* which has no model, and can never be copied. I do not think so highly of *Tanzaë* as of *Les Egaremens du Cœur et de L'Esprit*, or any other of the works of our author; all, however, bear the stamp of his peculiar genius, and have the merit of being written with a lightness, a rapidity of stile which few writers have ever attained.

After what I have said, it seems inconceivable, that the two volumes which have appeared,

under the title of the *Happy Orphans*, and which are to be followed by four more, can be from the pen of M. Crebillon. Even if the very conception of the work were not common and trivial,—if common sense were not revolted at every moment,—if the situations were not ill-imagined, constrained, and the same perpetually repeated,—if there was a single conversation well carried on,—yet the inconceivable negligence which reigns throughout the stile of this novel, the amphibologies and solecisms with which every page abounds, would be sufficient to render the thing absolutely incredible. Still, even though it were not avowed by its author, many features of the manner of M. de Crebillon are to be discerned amidst these manifold and striking defects, as in the worst picture of a celebrated painter, connoisseurs still discover the traces of the pencil and hand they have so often admired.

We have at present in Paris a man who finds his choicest food in the shame, the absurdities, the failures of authors, and who, even if he were not furnished with bad works, to tear to pieces, would still devise the means of living by his libels and satires upon the votaries of literature. This man, M. Freron, of whom M. de Voltaire says, that he is an insect bred from the corpse of M. Desfontaines, has fallen terribly upon these *Happy Orphans*, so that they ought now rather to be called *Unhappy*. Although the greater part of his remarks are not unfounded, yet the manner in which they are offered, is such as to have excited the indignation

of all reasonable people. There is a manner of saying every thing, of rendering even severe criticism not unpalatable to the person criticised, but the impudent and mercenary remarks of our journalists shew a total disregard of the consideration due to mankind in general, and particularly to those whose merits have given them a title to the public esteem, and whose failures have consequently the greater claim to forbearance.

I shall conclude this article with two remarks which I think not wholly irrelevant. The first is that in this novel, besides the negligencies of style, and continual amphibologies already noticed, and which must strike every body, there reigns a terrible monotony in the language. It might well be supposed to emanate from a foreigner who was for the first time attempting to write French, and was only acquainted with two or three different turns, and modes of arranging a period, which he employs alternately. My second remark is upon the choice of the subject;—why seek it among foreigners?—Besides that a writer rather owes to his nation the preference of treating those domestic subjects in which it is more particularly concerned, there is this strong objection to laying the scene in a foreign country;—unless the author have lived for a long time among the people, and in the country he takes upon himself to describe, he must be guilty of continual violations of costume; he will make people speak French who never knew a syllable of the language, and give them manners and customs of

which they never had the least idea. If M. de Crebillon had placed his scene in France, he would have avoided a number of poor and trivial remarks which he supposes give it an English air, and which would have been much more in their place in the little Comedy of the *Frenchman in London*, or some other production of a similar nature.

We have been favoured with another novel translated from the English, which has not succeeded much better than M. de Crebillon's *Happy Orphans*, though in my opinion it merited a more favourable reception. It is in four volumes, and is entitled the *History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*. Taken all together, this novel has furnished me with a good deal of amusement; but as the first volume is the worst, it is very possible that many readers have condemned the whole work without proceeding any farther. It is undoubtedly very far from being faultless; many things are to be found in it of a very bad taste, and the author has more talent than genius; that is to say, he knows better how to observe than to paint. But these defects are counterbalanced by two or three qualities which are very fine. Miss Betsy is a girl of good family; full of virtue, of honour, and of probity, but too inattentive to appearances. Her vanity and indiscretion lead her almost always into a neglect of what would be really for her interest, and into errors the most opposite in the world to true taste, by which she is perpetually exposed to

dangers, whence she escapes only by those lucky chances that never occur except in novels. Every new adventure corrects her in some degree, so that at length after repeated experience, and having become the victim of her caprice and imprudence in the most important concern of her life, the choice of a husband, she is at length entirely corrected, and a second marriage renders her as happy as she deserves to be.

A great truth and simplicity of manners reigns throughout this novel. The characters are perfectly natural, there is nothing romantic or extravagant in them; they are precisely the kind of men and women with whom we live, whom we have always before our eyes. There is a great deal of action which is well sustained throughout, none of the characters appear insulated, but all hang well together. Let me explain myself. I mean to say, that very commonly in some of our best constructed novels, each personage sustains very well the character assigned him, but it seems to be one that does not hold to any thing; he seems as if he existed alone in nature. Truth and probability demand a concatenation among all the characters, demand that every part of the stage should be filled in an appropriate manner, all being linked together, though some must be placed in more conspicuous stations than others. In the ordinary events of life, the actors who play their parts in them, besides the connection they have with such or such an event, have commonly many ties with other

persons totally unconnected with it. Now the great art in a novel is, without passing over such connections entirely, to suffer them only to appear from time to time, not dwelling upon them so as ever to lose sight of those on whom the principal action rests. This art, which is a very nice, and a very difficult one, our author seems perfectly to understand. On the whole I must say that the work has interested me extremely; in fact, nothing but what is natural and bears the stamp of truth, can long please or interest any one; the power of truth over our hearts is unbounded. M. de Florian who is in the service, is said to be the translator.

August, 1754.

Again translation, and more translation. The translating demon haunts, and the romancing demon follows us wherever we go with equal perseverance and pertinacity; all those little geniuses who do not write novels, translate. Three months instruction from a master of languages, is quite sufficient to render our young men fully capable of translating English works, and without knowing any thing of the people into whose interpreters they erect themselves, they cannot be easy till they enter upon their new vocation; that once commenced, they can never suffer many weeks to pass over their heads without presenting us with some new translation. Even the Germans will soon not be able to write in peace, without incurring the risk of

being mangled by our Paris translators. But those who are a little conversant with the performances of this illustrious body, will be able to judge tolerably well how far we have reason to expect any thing brilliant or conformable to true taste from their pens.

M. Fentry has just translated *Memoirs of the Court of Augustus, by Doctor Blackwell.* This work, which is but just published in London, is the fruit of twenty years labour bestowed on it by the good Doctor, but I honestly think that he might have found some better means of disposing of his time. Since we cannot place implicit faith in the accounts given us of the intrigues and cabals going forwards in the present Courts of Europe;—since we have good reason to suppose that if here and there we are treated with a morsel of truth, it is difficult to sift it out from the quantity of fable in which it is enveloped;—since this is pretty generally allowed to be the state of the case, I would fain ask our good English Doctor, what kind of arrangements he was enabled to make, that could put him in possession of the intrigues carried on in the Court of Augustus, or from what secret Memoirs he has extracted his discoveries? What an idea, in fact, to think of writing anecdotes of a Court which existed two thousand years ago. Nothing can be more extraordinary than the fancy of writing such a work, unless it be that of translating it.

Another translation is, the *Political Essays of Mr. Hume*, in two volumes 8vo. This writer is

already extremely celebrated in England from his Philosophical works, in which he professes scepticism with a boldness that few would have ventured upon. His Political Essays treat of Commerce, Luxury, Money, Public Credit, &c. &c. Nothing can be more interesting in the present state of governments than such topics. I have only two objections to make to Mr. Hume; in the first place that he is too fond of paradoxes, which makes him sometimes run almost into absurdity; and secondly that he is a Jacobite. I believe the English of that party to be as little patriotic as those who are sold to the Court, and to the interests of the House of Hanover.

Mr. Hume merited a better translator than the Abbé Leblanc. Any one in reading his translation would much rather take him for a Swiss than a Frenchman; it is totally devoid of taste or philosophy, and he shews a most profound ignorance of the subjects which form the materials of the Essays. He seems to have conceived that a dictionary was quite sufficient to make a man a translator, that he had nothing to do but to look out every word in its regular succession, and to write his own language in a most uncouth and barbarous manner, in order to be a good interpreter of the English language. One is so much the less disposed to pardon M. Leblanc for having mangled his author in this deplorable manner, as he assumes every where a tone of great arrogance and self-sufficiency exceedingly disgusting to all reasonable people, and as he has

prevented our having a translation from a man of great merit and talents who was about to prepare one, and who was perfectly capable of executing it in a way honourable both to himself and to his original. Indeed if it were only for example's sake I would have every such translator as M. Leblanc condemned to a month's confinement at St. Lazarus.*

It is time now to disencumber ourselves of this tribe of novel writers and translators. Let us take breath, and as a remuneration for the *ennui* they have occasioned us, advert to the third volume of the *Essay on Universal History* by M. de Voltaire; this is published in the interval till he can venture to avow the two first. In the second page you will find a comparison drawn between the commercial part of the community and the great, in which the latter are represented as resembling a swarm of ants who grub their habitations underground, while the vultures and the eagles tear each other to pieces in the air; in this passage you will recognize immediately the master in the art of writing. Every where you will find M. de Voltaire, both in the idea, the plan, and the stile of this volume; I have only one thing to allege against it, which is excess of prudence and caution; a fault not often to be imputed to our author. As in the two preceding volumes, on the one hand, our holy mother church was extremely offended

* The name given to the Hospitals for Lunatics in France.

alike by the eulogiums bestowed upon the Turks, and by the truths related of the Popes, and on the other hand, the volumes had been printed surreptitiously without the author's knowledge, he has taken this opportunity of disowning them. It is doubtless to confirm such an idea that he speaks of the Popes with so much circumspection, and that his friends the Mussulmen are mentioned in terms of great moderation. I am, however, as perfectly persuaded, notwithstanding the faults with which the two former volumes are disfigured, that they are by M. de Voltaire, as that they are not by myself; and I cannot help wishing, both for the advantage and the pleasure of the public, that he had preserved in the present volume the same valuable freedom, the same bold and easy tone of raillery that reigns in the others.

It is not that in this new volume the author suffers us to remain in ignorance that the people of Constantinople were disputing, with the utmost fury, upon the transfiguration, when the Turks were at their gates; it is not that when Louis XI devotes the Count of Burgundy to the Holy Virgin, he neglects to observe that true piety does not consist in making the Virgin a Countess, but in abstaining from bad actions and performing acts of public utility; it is not that these things are wholly passed over, but that they are merely given by the pen of the historian, without the pencil of the painter being permitted to add the brilliance of its colouring. The portrait of Pope Alexander

Borgia even, who of all the Saints that have governed the church, merited the least forbearance, is sketched by a timid and discreet hand, devoid of strength and boldness.

I cannot help smiling when I hear great encomiums lavished upon certain governments and their institutions, as having been established upon the most solid and sublime principles, as being the result of the most profound wisdom. There is only one little difficulty in all this, it is that history gives the lie direct and complete to such magnificent encomiums. It shews us that the establishment of all the known empires in the world has been stormy, and instead of being the work of wisdom, has been constantly the result of the passions of mankind.

When the tragedy of Herod and Marianne, by M. de Voltaire, was first brought out, the character of Varus was performed by an actor who was very ugly. His confident says to him: *You are troubled, Sir, you change countenance.*— *For God's sake let him change it!* cried a wit from the pit. Such a sarcasm was enough to have damned an ordinary piece.

September, 1754.

M. Cochin, the younger, and M. Bellicard have just published a pamphlet of a hundred pages in 12mo. under the title of *Observations upon the Antiquities of Herculaneum.* This work is di-

vided into three sections. The first is by M. Bellicard, an architect, and contains a description of the principal antiquities hitherto taken from this newly-discovered subterranean town; it is preceded by an account of the present state of Mount Vesuvius. The second section is by M. Cochin, draughtsman to the King, keeper of His Majesty's collection of drawings, and a member of the Academy of Painting and Sculpture; it contains a dissertation on the works of painting and sculpture found among these ruins. The third section includes an account of some antiquities scattered over the environs of Naples, Puzzuoli, Baïa, Cumea, Capua, &c. &c.: this is also by M. Bellicard. An anonymous writer, a man of letters, has prefixed to the pamphlet, *Historical Researches upon the ancient town of Herculaneum.*

M. Cochin and M. Bellicard took their journey into Italy, by order of the King, and were accompanied by M. Vandières, brother to Madame de Pompadour, director general of buildings, gardens, arts, academies, and manufactures to his Majesty, and to him the work is dedicated. The historical account of the town of Herculaneum is dry and uninteresting, and the two dissertations by M. Bellicard have no other merit than that of accuracy in the descriptions: but the section by M. Cochin, is highly deserving of the public attention. The paintings hitherto found, are not calculated to give us a great idea of the attainments of the ancients in this art. M. Cochin passes his

judgment upon them with perfect equity, divested of any prejudice. They are for the most part badly drawn and shew little knowledge of the forms and details of nature, with a total ignorance of the rules of perspective; they are little finished, and are executed very much in the stile of our scenery for the stage; the manner is grand, and the touch easy, but they display more boldness than knowledge. This mediocrity in the paintings is so much the more extraordinary, as the sculptures are for the most part extremely fine; an equestrian statue of Balbus is represented by M. Cochin as of the highest beauty.

It should appear as if this contrast between the paintings and the sculptures, discovered in these ruins, was merely the effect of chance; no general inferences, at least, can be drawn from it against the skill of the ancients in painting. We must have much more light, much more knowledge of the subject, many more pictures, many more historical facts with regard to their different ages, their different manners, much more certainty, in short, than we ever can have respecting these matters, before we can be authorised to make inductions derogatory to our masters, and establish prejudices unfavorable to their genius. On the contrary, the admiration with which they have spoken of their painters in some of their writings should seem to carry with it the strongest assurance that they must have possessed many very excellent pictures. All that they say of their sculptures is

so well confirmed by the precious remains of them which have descended to us, that we almost find their praises cold in comparison with the admiration we feel, and it is scarcely to be supposed that they who could judge so well in the one instance, should have been defective in their judgments in the other. If our descendants should have the misfortune of being re-plunged into barbarism it might very well happen that at a subsequent revival of letters and the arts, the works of Voltaire might be wholly lost, and nothing remain to posterity of our literature but those, for example, of the Chevalier Mouhy. Into what a grievous error, then, would a critic of those times fall who should decide upon the literary merits of our age by the works of a wretched scribbler which chance alone had preserved from the general destruction;—or, again, how great would be the mistake if any one were to attempt to prove by some relicks of our gross and ordinary earthen-ware that we had been in the wrong to boast so much of the beauty of our porcelaine.

The bad pictures found in Herculaneum, therefore far from authorizing us to form our judgment of the paintings of antiquity from them ought rather to serve as a warning to employ the utmost circumspection in forming a judgment at all. Their mediocrity only serves to prove that the same ages and countries may produce artists with very different degrees of talent. We know that the same century which has produced a Buffon,

a Diderot, a d'Alembert, a Duclos, has also produced a Chevrier, a Freron, a Lamorlière, and the works of the latter may very possibly descend to posterity as well as the works of the others or even preferably to the others, since it is not taste but chance that preserves them. The bad writers have always this chance of descending to posterity above the good ones, that they are commonly by far the most fertile in productions; M. de Chevrier would write ten volumes while M. de Buffon was writing one, and would therefore have ten chances to one in his favour against M. de Buffon.

Two observations may however be made upon the pictures of Herculaneum which appear well founded. In the first place, that the ancients, according to all appearance, had no very just idea of the theory of perspective, or the practice of its rules; for bad authors, and bad artists, always imitate, and endeavour as much as possible to copy the good. If then correct ideas of perspective had been fully established, we should have seen indications of them, even in the very worst pictures. It appears to me that the principal merit of the ancient pictures was sublimity of expression; that in this the whole genius of their painters was exerted. When Horace says *ut pictura, poesis* the painter says *ut poesis pictura.* My second observation is drawn from the grand and bold manner which seems inseparable from all the works of the ancients. It is that great men give insensibly a tone of grandeur in every thing to their

nation and to their age, even to those works which least admit of a display of taste and genius, and that this is still retained to a certain degree when the nation itself is falling into degeneracy. The free and republican form of the ancient governments could scarcely fail to inspire and perpetuate that boldness and invaluable taste for the fine and the great which characterises every thing in antiquity and which will always give all their works an immense advantage over those of the moderns. A man who should unite great talents with great penetration and discernment, and should be endowed at the same time with an exquisite and refined taste, might easily write the history of the arts and literature of any age, by the bad works alone which should remain to us. The species and tone of the bad that prevails would lead him to guess what must have been the character of the works of excellence, and which kind of beauty was the most likely to have predominated.

October, 1754.

There is no sight more agreeable to the sage or the philosopher than that of a great, or an extraordinary man. Our own existence seems ennobled in contemplating the virtues of a fellow-creature;—the lustre of great actions seems to prevent our falling into that sort of apathy which is the most deplorable of all states to a reflecting being, but which can with difficulty be avoided amidst the chagrins, the disgusts, the contrarieties

so abundant in human life. Those who by duty or inclination are occupied with promoting the public happiness, ought to have nothing so much at heart as to circulate the glory of great men, to give publicity to great actions, since there is nothing so likely to promote those qualities in mankind which are the most advantageous to society. The contemplation of such actions fills the heart with a glow of satisfaction which if it be not in itself positive happiness, at least supplies the place of it in the most soothing manner; while a still greater advantage is derived from the force of example, from the soul being thereby excited by the purest feelings, unmixed with selfishness or arrogance, to imitate the illustrious models it so much admires. The more rare are the occasions of this kind, and truly great men are not to be seen every day, besides which real virtue is of a retiring nature and often seeks to hide itself from the observation of the world,—the more this is the case the more assiduous ought we to be in endeavouring to find out such instances and hold them up to general admiration.

These reflections have been suggested by the disgrace of the Marquis de la Ensenada, which has been for some days the principal topic of conversation at Paris. The thirst of novelty which prevails here no less than it did formerly at Athens, places great events upon the scene for one moment to consign them the next, to eternal oblivion. But

the philosopher who knows how to weigh men and their actions does not proceed thus; he stops in their rapid course those objects which he finds worthy of his attention, and makes them the subjects of his meditations. M. de la Ensenada, as far as we may judge of men by their actions, when we are not in situations that enable us to examine them very closely, had for a long time merited the admiration of every wise and good man. Sublime in his projects, ardent and active in carrying them into execution, he had conceived the grand idea of rousing the Spanish nation from that lethargy in which it has languished for so many ages. He had laboured to attain this object in attending closely to every subject connected with it, and had been equally successful in all; it seems as if nothing was wanting to fill up the measure of his glory but his disgrace,—that nothing else remained to make of him a hero worthy the pen of Plutarch;—a title which according to my ideas is above all others with which a great man could be decorated.

It is said that M. de la Ensenada learnt the news of his disgrace with the tranquillity of a true philosopher. Much more calm and collected than the officer who was sent by the King to arrest him, it was he who instructed him in the performance of his duty, who gave up the papers and keys which the other in his confusion had omitted to demand. His mildness was equal to his tranquillity; both rendered him in this awful moment superior to

himself. What a splendid epoch to a great man is that of his disgrace!—Raised above the storm by his firmness and equanimity, he beholds unshaken the vain efforts of the cabal that has conspired against him, while pusillanimity trembles at the remotest idea of a reverse. The Spanish minister, without birth, without fortune, guided by his native genius alone, had passed successively through various posts, and at length guided the helm of affairs; disgraced, he resumed instantly his primitive state, nor would even carry a servant to share it with him, because before he was in place he was his own servant. On the day following his disgrace, being arrived at the place where he was to remain for the night, he passed the evening with the minister of the village, talking over indifferent subjects; and knowing that this good man was fond of amusing himself with a certain game at cards, much in fashion in Spain, he played with him for some time with the utmost possible attention and composure.

The public papers have talked much of an edict published by M. de la Ensenada against the monks, which contributed exceedingly to bring on his disgrace; they ought to have preserved carefully this monument of the Spanish minister's glory. I will transcribe it here, such as it was given to me by a man of talents who translated it in haste for the benefit of the society in which he lives. Sovereigns who are anxious to perform their duty, and Sages who examine and pass judgment upon their

conduct, ought to be equally struck with the wisdom of this edict; they alone know the difficulty of framing laws adapted to supplying the wants of mankind, and correcting their vices, and the consequent merit of those who frame good ones. But now to give you that in question:

"The piety of the King having considered the flagrant abuses and disorder that arise from admitting so great a number of individuals into the different religious orders, which only occasions contempt for these holy institutions, his greatness of mind has been so much penetrated with it, that he wishes to find the most gentle and desirable means of remedying the abuse, to the end that these different orders, which are considered as the pillars of the church, may be supported in their utmost perfection, and that they may not be the continual objects of the satires and complaints which at present they draw upon themselves; that on the contrary they may be an example and model to the faithful, that they may excite their emulation, making virtue flourish and extirpating vice, for the greater honour and glory of God.

"For these causes his Majesty, with the consent of the Holy Apostolic See, orders that, for the term of ten years, no individual shall be received into the different religious orders, under any pretence whatever; at the expiration of this term representations shall be made to his Majesty, from the different provinces, of the indispensable necessity they may have for additional members in these societies,

and of the numbers actually existing in each convent, that permission may be given for admitting such additional numbers as may be thought expedient.

"Experience having proved that the number of persons who have taken their religious vows at too early an age has been the occasion of numerous apostasies, these young persons not having been able to subdue their passions so as to conform themselves to the duties of such holy institutions;—for these causes his Majesty wills and ordains that no one shall be admitted before the age of twenty-eight years, under pain of the delinquent's incurring the utmost rigours of his indignatiou.

"That, considering the too great wealth possessed by some of the religious orders, and the poverty of others, his Majesty has resolved, and wills, that to each society shall be granted annually such a portion as shall be necessary to support it with decency, without diminishing the means of celebrating divine worship with all proper splendour and solemnity; the allowance to be regulated according to the number of brethren in each convent, so that they may live peaceably together and not molest the subjects of his Majesty, who by this means shall be soothed and comforted.

"His Majesty being informed that a great many wills and codicils have been made in favour of religious orders, to the prejudice of the lawful heirs, and having been farther informed that these bequests have been made at the earnest and pressing

solicitations of the members of those orders, even against the dictates of their own consciences,—wills and ordains, that henceforward no ecclesiastic shall interfere in the making of wills and codicils, but that every testator shall be at liberty to bequeath his property as the laws and his own conscience best direct, without any one having the power to trouble him upon the subject, either in health or in sickness.

"His Majesty having known by experience that the frequent and free introduction of members of religious societies into private families has led to their assuming a too familiar and dictatorial tone, from which great inconveniences have arisen to some families, and shame and dishonour to others, wills and ordains, that the Superiors of the different convents shall pay the strictest attention to their being kept strictly closed, so that the members and their vocation may be held in all due respect and veneration."

Such were the provisions of this enactment; it has been considered here as so ably conceived, that it was at first not believed genuine, but supposed to be the production of some philosophic mind at Paris. I have often thought that an excellent work might be compiled by collecting together the wisest laws and the best regulations, the most beneficial institutions of every government and capital, with a view of the most sublime actions that have resulted from them; actions which might not perhaps have any existence in reality, but

which would seem to flow naturally from the spirit and principles of the constitution of each state, and which would do so actually, if men, by being wise, merited to be happy.

While we are waiting for a translation of Mr. Hume's Essays somewhat more readable than that already mentioned, with which the Abbé Leblanc has favoured us, it will not, perhaps, be unacceptable to make some observations with respect to a man who now enjoys so high a reputation in his own country. Notwithstanding the *éclat* he has acquired in England, and the attention which he already begins to excite in France; he does not appear to me a man of first-rate talents. His style, as far as a foreigner may be permitted to decide upon it, appears flat, it is only by the importance of his subjects that he is rendered supportable. I am deceived, or his countrymen will reprobate his decided taste for the French while the latter will not feel very much flattered by his preference, because he does not take a view of them on the side which exhibits them in the most estimable light. From what he says, the just inference is, that politeness is the first of virtues, and that the man of polished manners is superior to all others. But, with all this, Mr. Hume has such confined ideas with regard to politeness that he confounds it almost entirely with French manners; according to his ideas, the Ciceros, the Scipios, and all the Romans must have been mere

rustics. See, on this subject, one of his Essays, in which there are, however, many things quite new and very happy.

November, 1754.

On the two days following the Festival of St. Martin, the Royal Academy of Inscriptions, and the Royal Academy of Sciences held each a public sitting according to custom. These meetings are dedicated to pronouncing the eulogiums of deceased Academicians, and to reading Memoirs upon subjects which are very seldom amusing, and not often very instructive. Ennui commonly presides at them; one is almost tempted to say, that the secretary of the Academy, who pronounces the eulogiums, seems as if he were reading for hire; it only occasionally happens that some interesting Memoir rouses the auditor from the lethargy into which he is frequently thrown. I shall not, therefore, detain you long on this subject, lest the subtile and powerful deity of Ennui should extend his influence to my pages. The Memoir of the Count de Caylus, read at the Academy of Inscriptions, which interested and entertained the public very much at the meeting, appears the only thing that merits to be here particularly noticed.

However valuable the discovery of painting in oil may be, one cannot but acknowledge that there is something very disagreeable in the glare which this fluid throws over the picture; at the same time it is agreed on all hands that water-co-

lours are unworthy the hand of a great painter. These two manners were unknown to the antients, and the common opinion is, that their mode of painting was more in the nature of our enamel. There is a passage in Pliny which informs us very clearly, that the ancients painted with wax. This secret has long fixed the attention of the Count de Caylus, and has been the subject of his meditations and experiments. After many essays, he has succeeded in substituting wax for oil, and it is this success which occasions the memoir in question. But it was not sufficient to announce such a discovery; it was necessary to give us specimens of it, and he exhibited a picture painted in wax, conformably with his ideas. This picture was from the hands of M. Vien, a young artist, who last year returned from his travels in Italy, and exhibited two or three historical pictures at the Louvre, which gave the highest ideas of his talents. It is much to be hoped that he will carefully cherish that grand style of colouring, that fine taste of picturesque composition which he has brought with him from the country of the arts, and not be in the case of so many of our painters, who in two or three years after their return from Rome, have totally forgotten all they acquired there, and adopted a littleness of stile and a false manner of colouring, insupportable even to the least delicate eyes.

The picture executed by M Vien, according to the ideas of M. de Caylus, represents a bust of Minerva with her casque upon her head. It is painted

on wood, but M. de Caylus does not despair of making this mode of painting answer in time upon canvas. The colouring of the picture has a singular softness and lustre. There are persons who insist upon it that the effect is very similar to painting with flat paint, but I cannot say that it struck me in this point of view; I however saw it only by candle-light. Be this as it may, the discovery is highly valuable and important, for even should this manner of painting be found to have its inconveniences, there is no reason to doubt that it may be carried to a high degree of excellence, by the perseverance and repeated attempts of experienced artists. The most difficult thing is always to take the first step, to open the career. When once a firm footing is obtained, the little obstacles that thrust themselves in the way are easily surmounted. While we are waiting for M. de Caylus to publish his secret, which he probably will do ere long, it may be permitted to hazard some conjectures, and, according to the proverb, to judge of colours like a blind man; I would therefore make two observations upon painting in wax. The first is that, however we are assured to the contrary by M. de Caylus, I cannot believe it can be durable; dust and heat must both be dangerous enemies to these pictures. The convenience of folding and rolling them without risk, is nothing in comparison with this inconvenience. The second observation is, that this manner of painting must be attended with a great deal of trouble. A certain degree of heat must be necessary to make the wax

admit of the colours incorporating themselves with it, and this circumstance must be very embarrassing, and even disagreeable. Now, nothing is more dangerous than to embarrass the artist by processes that are difficult and troublesome. His genius is commonly damped, and that admirable boldness, so necessary to the execution of fine and grand things, is lost in the *ennui* of any thing troublesome and vexatious in the preparation.

The Abbé Terrasson has left a posthumous work in two very thin volumes octavo, entitled *Philosophy applicable to every thing that is an object of the mind, and of reason.* This pompous title was probably not chosen by the Abbé himself, who was a philosopher, simple, unaffected, not addicted to petty vanities of any kind, and totally unpractised in the tricks of authorship. I say the tricks of authorship, for one is exceedingly surprized, after so magnificent a title, to see two little volumes, the third part of which is occupied by a preface from the editor, and the eulogiums pronounced on the Abbé Terrason by M. d'Alembert, and M. de Moncrif, three years ago.

Our Abbé was a man of considerable talents, of great simplicity of manners, and singular *naïveté.* He had not a very comprehensive faith, and I should conjecture that his *thoughts* have been garbled in various ways. He died without receiving the last sacraments, and with a tranquillity which may be believed the more sincere from its

not being ostentatiously displayed. He said very composedly, that he had no objection to the sacraments, and when he was asked whether he believed all that the holy catholic and Roman church teaches, he answered in the same composed manner, that he found that impossible. When the Confessor came to confess him, he said, "I am in too weak a state to speak, be so good as to question Madame Luguet; she can answer every thing." Madame Luguet was his housekeeper. The confessor, however, began to question him: "Have you ever in your life been addicted to luxury?" "Madame Luguet, have I been addicted to luxury?" enquired the sick man. "A little, Sir," answered the housekeeper. "A little, Sir," repeated the Abbé.

The Abbé Terrasson was the intimate friend of M. Falconet, of the Academy of Inscriptions, consulting physician to the king, a charming old man, who at the age of fourscore, has all the fire, all the powers, all the gaiety, all the graces of youth. This extraordinary man unites to a very extensive erudition, the most respectable and estimable qualities of the mind and heart. He is regarded by all men of letters as their father. For a long time the literati of his acquaintance have always assembled at his house on a Sunday. These assemblies have had the appellation given them of the masses of the Literati; the Abbé Terrasson never omitted attending these masses.

We have several works of this philosopher.

He was a good geometrician, and had the courage to take the part of Sir Isaac Newton, at the time when almost all the Academy of Sciences were still Cartesians. He was not so much of a *bel-esprit* as a philosopher, and not of equal authority in matters of taste as in physics and metaphysics. In the famous quarrel of the antients *versus* the moderns, he declared for the latter, using a great deal of false reasoning upon the occasion, with some appearance of justice, but without any taste. He wrote, too, in the time of Law, in defence of his famous system. You are probably acquainted with his romance of Sethos, which, though cold and often written in a very bad taste, holds rather a high place in the opinions of those who can overlook these minor defects in favour of a work which makes them amends by being perfectly philosophic, having much elevation of sentiment, and a considerable neatness of turn.

The Abbé Terrasson's posthumous work may be judged in a few words. Almost every thing relating to philosophy is good, almost every thing that relates to the belles-lettres is devoid of common sense. With regard to the theology, the thoughts on this subject seem to be added by some other hand, or at least, they must have been written by the Abbé when very young, perhaps while he was a student at *L'Oratoire*. Every one who knew him in the more advanced years of his life, will know that his ideas were then very different. To see how far the fury of systems can lead the most

comprehensive mind, and the most philosophic head astray, we need only follow the wanderings of our good Abbé. He compliments himself highly with the most profound complacency, and the utmost sincerity, on a comparison he has invented between the different ages of the world, and the different ages of man. According to this resemblance, the Greeks stand in the place of infancy, the Romans in that of adolescence, and the moderns in that of virility; for this reason, we must be vastly superior to the antients. On the same principle, the Iliad is the work of a child, the Eneid that of a youth, and Telemachus that of a man. All the Abbé Terrasson's decisions in matters of taste are fashioned so as to be in perfect conformity with this ridiculous and extravagant hypothesis. It is a great pity that he forgot, in his parallel, the times of darkness and barbarism introduced by our respectable ancestors, the Goths. He might, I think, have compared them very happily to those malignant fevers, or to the small-pox, or any other among the diseases of a similar nature, by which the human frame is so generally attacked in its passage from youth to manhood. Such a comparison would have been exceedingly ingenious and very demonstrative, at the same time that it would have rendered the system much more complete.

This ridiculous quarrel of the antients against the moderns, which has been the occasion of blotting over so much paper, and in which so many persons of merit, among whom may be numbered M. de

97766

Fontenelle, M. de La Motte, and our Abbé; have played what may be called rather paltry characters; this ridiculous quarrel, I say, is somewhat in the case of many others that have been similarly circumstanced, it may be decided in half a dozen lines. Who can doubt that, with respect to those sciences which depend upon the exactness of observations made during a long succession of ages, upon discoveries which chance has gradually brought to light, we have greatly the advantage of the antients. But he who imagines that we are superior to them on the score of genius, and all that depends on the elasticity of the mind alone, must have a very shallow head, incapable of forming a tolerable judgment on any subject, and might have been born in every age without doing honour to any. Woe to him who can still make it a question whether Homer be sublime, whether Virgil be beautiful! it is a wager of a hundred to one, that he would not have any more feeling for the beauties of Corneille, of Racine and of Voltaire. His gross and insensible organs are not in a state to receive those lively and delicate impressions which constitute the sublime and the beautiful in the ideas of those who are more happily organized; such shallow heads are offended with every thing which is not exactly conformable to the customs of their own age and their own country.

I am certain that by having one instance alone given me of the judgment passed by a man, I could instantly point out his ideas upon a vast number of

other subjects. If, for instance, I were told that such an one was a great admirer of Homer, I would lay a considerable wager that he was an enthusiast for Raphaël and Michael Angelo, for Pergolesi, for Molière, &c. &c. Equally certain should I feel that the same man who had no taste for Homer would consider Bouchet as superior to Raphaël, the stile of M. de Fontenelle superior to that of M. de Buffon, and the Abbé Trublet a finer writer than Montaigne. It would not be difficult, as you see, to compose as large a volume of detached thoughts as the Abbé Terrasson's, if we would observe the sciences with a little attention, and abandon ourselves to the crowd of ideas that press upon the mind when it thinks of these matters.

January, 1755.

For some months a rumour has been in circulation, which increases every day, that the *Pucelle* of M. de Voltaire is actually in the press in a foreign country. It is said moreover that it will soon appear, and that the author is under no small perturbation upon the subject; a whisper is even in circulation that there are copies already in Paris which sell at four louis. If this be true, there can be no doubt that we have here the principal cause of our philosopher's retreat to the banks of the Leman lake. I know that this clandestine impression of his work has occasioned him a great deal of uneasiness.

There are few subjects more difficult to treat than that of languages. In order to investigate

profoundly the real advantages and disadvantages of a language, so much judgment is requisite, so great a delicacy of ear, so much refinement of taste, such metaphysical nicety and discrimination, that none but a head truly philosophic and very happily organized, can hope to succeed in the task. Fools who never conceive it possible for any thing to be too arduous for them, are as little capable of being astonished at any thing As therefore the merits of the *Letter upon the Deaf and Dumb* are, for instance, far above their dull and gross comprehensions; they will, on the other hand, admire exceedingly the most insipid works imaginable, provided the author has known how to throw a little varnish over them that dazzles the eye. Thus the fool of the great world lavishes upon the fool of the literary world, the most extravagant encomiums: *Oh, how fine that is!—What a sublime thought!—What an excellent view to take of the subject!—That stroke is indeed inimitable!*—Similar exclamations are, it is true, sometimes drawn from the lips of the discerning and the enlightened, from those superior minds who alone know how to give them in a tone suited to their importance, because they never bestow them but upon the efforts of true genius, because they are always the effect of very powerful impressions.

Yet it is this part of the public, little numerous as they are, that we ought to be emulous to please; its decisions, uninfluenced by prejudice or interest, are alone always just; its decrees, founded on reason

and truth, are eternal and invariable. Fools, on the contrary, not being guided by any principle, change their tone at every moment, and will esteem that excellent to-day which yesterday they condemned with the utmost severity. They often make me laugh when I see them rise into the utmost warmth, pronounce their judgments with the most decisive and peremptory tone, bestowing the highest eulogiums upon what is at the best of a very middling cast, perhaps very bad, and condemning with equal vehemence, the productions of those of the first talents; all which a person of a little address may make them contradict in the course of half an hour, without their being the least aware of it themselves. The subject of languages is one upon which this numerous and respectable class of men are above all others eager and forward to lay down the law. There is not one among them who does not consider himself as fully competent to decide upon the merits of his own mother tongue; and the more remote his ideas are from those usually held, the more highly he values them, the more thoroughly he is convinced that they are such as none but a truly sublime genius could have conceived.

This is the lot of fools. I would, for my part, recommend even to persons the best-informed, and with the best judgment, not to meddle with such a question till after having reflected upon it very maturely. As they have attained that degree of deference and respect with the public to which their talents entitle them, they cannot enter upon it has-

tily without doing much injury to their own cause. Their name has a very great influence with men of modest merit, who, distrusting their own judgment, dare not doubt the decisions of one whose reputation is fully established. Yet, since sooner or later the truth must be discovered, for truth always will prevail in the end, they are concerned and mortified to find the respect they had conceived for the talents and productions of the author, involuntarily diminished.

In this case has the Abbé Prevost sometimes placed himself, and in such a predicament does he stand at the present moment. Born with great talents, to which we are indebted for several works replete with beauties, master of the art of affecting and agitating the soul at his pleasure, always easy, natural, and noble in his stile, the father of so many children whose destinies have been brilliant, among which may be particularized, *Cleveland*, *Memoirs of a Man of Quality*, *The Dean of Coleraine*, and *Manon l'Escaut*; he has occasionally undertaken works which would no doubt have been well executed if he would have given himself the trouble necessary for it, since with his powers we may almost say that a man can do whatever he will. It has happened, however, that he has not taken any pains because they were, if I may say so, beneath his pen; the genius which is fertile in invention, grows impatient in pursuing objects of mere literary research.

I have somewhere thrown together some reflections upon the French language, which I think ought

to be established as a basis, if one would draw a parallel between that and the other languages of Europe. But the first law, and the most indispensable of all is, never to confound the genius of the language with its mechanism, with the turn it takes under the pen of a man of genius, and of those in general by whom it is written. If these things be not distinguished, any one who treats this subject will be sure to make a tissue of reflections, each more absurd than the other. The Abbé Prevost has prefixed to the *Journal Etranger*, of which he has undertaken to be the Editor, an Introduction to the Historical Department, in which he treats of Italian literature, and the Italian language, confounding at every instant what belongs to the latter with what has no connection except with the former. A *bel-esprit* remarked upon this dissertation, that it was extremely well written, like every thing from the hands of the Abbé Prevost, it had only one defect, that there was not a word of truth in all that the author advanced. We shall here notice some of his greatest mistakes; some that have excited the utmost indignation in several Italians who are here at present.

The Abbé begins by pronouncing a high eulogium on the Italian language, to which he assigns much delicacy, sweetness and harmony, a charm which delights, and renders it particularly adapted to poetry and music. After thus politely granting it the qualities that it has the most incontestably, he goes on to say, that it cannot have so much

softness and sweetness without being wanting on the side of force and energy. This may appear reasonable in theory, if the contrary could not be demonstrated by the fact, as we shall shew. "No "language," says he, "is more remote from the "sublime, less adapted to the expression of the "grander emotions of the soul." The direct contrary of this proposition is the real truth, and in fact the whole of the dissertation must be read, considering it in the same point, that the reverse of almost every proposition is the fact. Should we not be tempted to say that one who could make such an observation, never can have looked into the works of any of the great Italian poets. Open a page of Tasso, of Ariosto, or even of Metastasio, by chance, and you will scarcely fail of finding strokes powerful, energetic, sublime, such as cannot fail at the same time to inspire us with a warm admiration of the poet, and impress us with a strong feeling of the happy genius of a language which can express every thing with a simplicity, a grace, a strength to which no other living language can approach. It is generally conceived here, that the airs which terminate the scenes of the Operas in Italy, are only couplets or little madrigals written to give the musician an opportunity of displaying his talents. Thus it is that ignorance decides, ever speaking with confidence upon all subjects without reflecting on any. But on the slightest investigation, it will be seen that the principal airs of an Opera are almost all devoted to the expression of some grand emotion of the

soul; and how could that be if, as the Abbé Prevost says, the language was not adapted to such a kind of expression. How could the musician ever succeed in drawing from us heart-rending cries of grief, in piercing us to the very soul, with feeble words, harmonious it is true, but destitute of force and energy, consequently declaimed ridiculously; for I know of nothing more ridiculous than attempting to declaim with fire and force what is in itself poor and feeble.

But let us examine some of these words which are represented as so unsuited to expressing the stronger emotions of the soul. I open by chance a volume of Metastasio, it is in *l'Ezio*, and I find these words:—

Ah non son' io che parlo
E il barbaro dolore
Che mi divide il core
Che delirar mi fà.

The person who speaks, is a woman in the anguish of grief. She begins the scene by bitter complaints against her fate, bitter repinings at her situation, which is extremely cruel, till at length her feelings are worked up to a sort of delirium. Now I would ask, whether these words are not exactly such as agonizing grief would naturally draw from the soul under such circumstances? Could we find in any language words more simple, more energetic, more poetic at least with regard to the expression and colouring? "Ah!" exclaims

the sufferer, " it is not I that speak, it is cruel " grief which rends my heart, which distracts my " senses !"—Such a mode of expression, it is true, would not pass in the French language,—but why ? because that is wanting in grace and simplicity; of this language it may indeed be said with truth, that if it must be allowed perfectly expressive in every thing that relates to taste and to high polish, it must also be owned that it is very far from the sublime. The *Let Him Die* of old Horatius is sublime in all languages, because the beauty of the words does not depend upon the language, but upon the poet alone. The sublime of the Italians frequently cannot be translated, because it belongs to the charms of the language alone, which gives a grace unknown to the other languages of Europe. But I am dwelling too long upon a thing which may be verified at any moment, by opening any good or even middling Italian poet in the same casual way.

I have often made a remark, which has proved to me the striking difference that exists between the French and Italian languages; it is that poverty and flatness of expression is so palpable in the former that it produces an instant effect, the book falls irresistibly from the reader's hands, and he has not the courage to pick it up again. Flatness in Italian produces a very opposite effect, it excites impatience, it gives a feeling of vexation, yet fixes the attention in spite of oneself, because it is

clothed in a language so beautiful, so harmonious, that it gives pleasure in the reading, however essentially insipid the thought or diction may be. I always finish, when I meet with such instances, with hating the author, because the charm of his language has made me pass over the disgust I ought to have felt at his inspidity. It were wasting time to attempt refuting the Abbé Prevost, if he does not find the beginning of the celebrated scene of *Merope* very powerful, very energetic, far from that feeble softness with which he so unjustly reproaches the Italian language.

The Abbé is not more happy in the general principles he advances, than in the application he has made of them to the Italian. "Languages," says he, "like the arts, have no known "bounds. If it be true that they take the character "of those that speak them, they must be elevated "under the influence of a man of genius; witness "the French language, which owes perhaps all its "strength and majesty to the great Corneille."— We have here abundance of errors in a very few words. The arts, far from not knowing any limits, are circumscribed within bounds so narrow and so well known, that we might almost say they are manifest even to children. It is only genius that knows no bounds; led by a sort of instinct into the path which it follows, it rushes forwards, it overleaps the bounds which a *timid*, but at the same time *severe* taste would prescribe; it astonishes

by its flights, it creates, it incessantly produces new things. The comparison of languages to the arts is thus far just, that the boundaries of the one are as perfectly defined as those of the other. Would that painter be considered as skilful in his art, who, having occasion to mark very distinctly the contours of one of his principal figures should, in order to give it the necessary appearance of projection, place a bas-relief behind the canvas?—Should we not rather say that such a man must be alike devoid of genius and of taste?—Taste forbids us to confound the boundaries of each art, and genius consists, not in extending these bounds, but in subduing all the obstacles that present themselves within them. The man of genius will never attempt to change the nature of his language, for this is a chimera, but he will endeavour to polish and refine it. Many of our philosophers appear to be in a great error on this point; they imagine that the language depends absolutely upon the state of literature and the arts in a country. But it is the people who speak the language that are its masters, not the enlightened few who write it. If a nation set out with being wise, instructed and philosophic, we might, with reason, expect the language of such a country to be superior to that of any other. It would undoubtedly be luminous, simple, soft, powerful, energetic, expressive, and full of precision; but we have all begun with being barbarous; ages have been necessary to pass by imperceptible degrees from bar-

barism, and ignorance to the cultivation of letters, and those arts which contribute to the ornament and convenience of life. The genius of every language was formed before a single writer in it had arisen, and if taste and reason may disencumber it of some little defects, they can never change its most prominent features; it is easy to throw aside the bad draperies which disguise the figure, but the defects of the figure itself, if any there be, must still remain, and will only appear the more glaring. The genius of a language, whether it be more or less happy, depends on such abstract causes that it would be very difficult to compose the history of it, and still more to render such a history intelligible to the mass of mankind. But the question of fact is not doubtful. With a moderate taste, and with good faith, it is not difficult to see that of all living languages the Italian is the only one which has no essential defect, that it bends without difficulty to all the characters which the man of genius would give it, that it is susceptible of every kind of beauty, that it is the natural idiom of poetry, of music, of eloquence, of history and of reason.

It would not be difficult to fill many more pages with remarks on the Abbé Prevost's dissertation. He says, that with regard to history, Italy has no model to offer us.—How?—what then are the writings of Machiavelli, of d'Avila, and above all of Guiccardini? What he says upon Italian Comedy is the best part of the work. At some future opportunity we shall take occasion to speak

of the effects which the taste that prevails in society, has upon the genius and the literature of the country.

I have already had the honour of mentioning to you M. de Caylus's invention of painting with wax. Connoisseurs have been exceedingly divided upon the expectations that might be formed from this discovery. The most discerning think that it will be much more tedious than oil, and will not have the same facility of giving minute objects and transparent colours, that it will consequently never be adapted to rural scenery. With the little knowledge I have upon the subject, I may hazard my opinion without any danger of committing myself. I think, then, that this manner will have all the advantages and disadvantages of fresco, which it resembles very much in the effect; I do not speak of its duration. M. Vien in the mean time has painted some new pieces in wax, representing bunches of flowers, which are extremely beautiful. M. de Caylus has not yet judged proper to publish his secret. M. de Montami, first *maître-d'hôtel* to the Duke of Orleans, an excellent chymist, has been making experiments in order, if possible, to discover it, and as he has not imposed secrecy upon me, I have no reason to conceal what he told me yesterday. It is that essential oil of turpentine has the property of dissolving wax, so as to render it proper to be mixed with colours for the pencil, and in a very short space of time this oil evaporates entirely. Such

is the discovery he has made; it is however very possible that M. de Caylus's secret may be something very different; perhaps also if M. de Montami were to attempt carrying his discovery into execution, he might find many obstacles of which he is not now aware. He has however in any case given us ground to go upon for making experiments.

Charles de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu, died lately at Paris at the age of sixty-five. His life had been an honour to human nature from his admirable writings and his irreproachable manners. If it were not better to forget our faults, and shut our eyes on wrongs which we cannot remedy, I should be tempted to exclaim against the conduct of the nation towards one who has done it so much honour,—towadrs one to whom France will owe all the happy effects resulting from the revolution his writings have effected in mens minds; yet this man has quitted the world, we may say, almost unknown to his countrymen and unnoticed by them. His funeral was not attended by any persons of note; and of all our literati M. Diderot was the only one who paid him the last tribute of following his remains to the grave. The King, to his credit, gave the dying sage a strong proof of his esteem in sending the Duke de Nivernois to enquire after him. If we had merited to be contemporaries of so great a man we should have quitted our vain and frivo-

lous pleasures to go and weep over his tomb, and the whole nation, in mourning, would have set a bright example to Europe of the homage due from a grateful nation to one who has added lustre to its annals by his genius and virtues.

April, 1755.

There is scarcely any nation where letters have been at all cultivated which has not epic and comic poems in its language. For a very long time the inimitable Don Quixote has not been the property of Spain alone, but has been adopted by all Europe. The French have, in this way, the *Lutrin* of Boileau, an admirable work, to which posterity will add *la Pucelle* of M. de Voltaire. The English have a poem of this kind which has a very great reputation, *Hudibras*, by Samuel Butler, who lived in the times of the catastrophe of Charles the first, and under Charles the second; he was a man of genius and merit, indigent, esteemed and forgotten. It is only within the last thirty years that a citizen of London, by name John Barber, has erected a monument to him in Westminster Abbey, where he is buried. It is said that the being conversant with *Hudibras* has been far from disadvantageous to the author of *la Pucelle*; he is thought to have extracted from it many ingenious and pleasant strokes, which he has adjusted after his own fashion, so as to adapt them properly to his purpose, and certainly on the score of wit and point they would not lose in his hands. The

idea of fame with two trumpets, one at her mouth, the other behind, belongs originally to the author of *Hudibras*. Be this as it may, the poem in question is considered as a chef-d'œuvre in its way, full of genius, humour, and wit. The subject is the civil wars which desolated England during the author's life. The quarrels between the Puritans and the High-Churchmen in particular furnish admirable scope for Butler's peculiar vein of humour; the Puritans are turned into ridicule in a superior manner. As these strokes are of a very fine species of satire, and allude to a number of little anecdotes of the times, it is not astonishing that the work is in many parts unintelligible to persons of other countries and other times, and it is therefore very astonishing that any one should be bold enough to undertake translating it into French; perhaps of all the English works that could have been selected for the purpose, it is the least translateable. The first canto of a translation in prose has however already appeared, and, if the public desire it, they are to be favoured with the whole poem. Now, as the public has no means of answering to such a proposition, its silence is generally interpreted by the self-complacent author into consent, and we may doubtless therefore expect our literature to be enriched with the remaining cantos.

A very lively pamphlet has just appeared, entitled *The History and the Secret of the Art of Painting in Wax*. It is said to be by M. Diderot

and indeed it has very much the air of having escaped from the pen of this admirable writer in one of his moments of gaiety and relaxation. It is written with a great deal of spirit, rapidity, and gaiety. Here we have the secret discovered, as it has been practised by M. Bachelier in several pictures which he has painted; still we do not know whether or not we are in possession of M. de Caylus's secret, since he continues to observe the most profound silence upon this subject. Those who wish to be informed upon the discovery will find in this pamphlet all the light thrown upon it that they can possibly wish. Those who only take a moderate interest in it will read the pamphlet with pleasure. It is replete with philosophical remarks, and strokes which bear a strong impression of proceeding from the genius to whom the work is ascribed.

June, 1755.

To return to the Abbé Prevost. In his Dissertation upon Languages, which we have already partially examined, he advances a proposition highly deserving of farther investigation. The little progress that comedy has made in Italy, he thinks, is to ascribed to the imperfect state of society there: the same might have been said of most parts of Europe; since society is equally imperfect in them, and the comic theatre not in a state of greater advancement. In fact, although there are many excellent strokes and things truly comic in the comedies of other countries, and especially in the Spanish

pieces, it must be allowed that, on the French stage alone, comedy has attained any thing approaching to perfection. For this we are indebted on the one hand to the superior genius of Molière; and on the other, it is universally allowed, with good reason, that in no other country are the charms, the refinements, all that constitutes the agreeable in society, carried to such a height as among us. It remains to ascertain whether these two things hold inseparably to each other? whether the one necessarily produces the other?—a question which you will at once see resembles very much in its nature the famous dispute of the Citizen of Geneva relative to the Arts and Sciences, and whether the corruption that generally, in a civilized country, attends the progress of literature and the arts is a necessary consequence of them?

Our Abbé proves his proposition in the following manner: "The comic scene," he says, "has no "farther compass than the manners of a country; "consequently in one where society is restrained "within narrow bounds—where there is little com- "munication among mankind—where women, with- "out whom there can be no society, are kept un- "der a great degree of confinement, and subjected "to a painful reserve, what remains for the comic "pencil to paint but objects of general ridicule or "professional vices.—Now these are sterile funds "to draw from in comparison with the multitude "of characters that are presented to the true painter "of manners where society is established upon a

"more unrestrained footing, and is enlivened by "the constant presence of both sexes."—Here we find the great advantages of society to the pourtrayer of comic scenes asserted, but only two pages after, our author appears to contradict himself, and destroy what he had been before endeavouring to establish. "Notwithstanding the defects," says he, "of the Italian theatre, it must be acknowledged "that there are many pieces not only good in their "kind, but in which the characters are much more "marked than in our own. Excess of refinement "often carries us far away from the end we pro-"pose to ourselves; our manners, less forcible than "those of our neighbours, render our pencil timid, "and in fearing to wound nature we miss catching it. "This fear makes us often step within too confined "limits in picturing the tragic, and still more fre-"quently occasions our comic characters to be "distinguished only by very light shadings. Our "pictures, like our sensations, fail on the side of "keenness and depth of feeling; the extreme po-"lish of our manners, which corrects and softens "nature, deprives it to a certain extent of its strength "and character."

Here indeed are great inconveniences resulting from the state of society among us; since it cannot be denied that this politeness, this timidity of genius, this excessive refinement, owe their origin to no other cause than the habit we have of passing our lives in a constant round of intercourse with each other, in perpetual circles of com-

pany. To what then is the Abbé Prevost's system reduced?—He has the air of not having inquired very deeply into it himself. In few words, it is this: "Among a people where society is in a very imper- "fect state, where the intercourse of mankind with "each other is less easy, and established upon "more contracted principles than in France, there "is more of originality, there are more characters, "manners much more strongly marked, conse- "quently the man of genius will find a much "more extensive career for sketching his charac- "ters, many more models to sketch from. But "among such a people, society being exceedingly "restrained, and the opportunities of communica- "tion much less frequent, this same man of genius "will not have equal facility of making his obser- "vations, of repeating them as often as he pleases, "and painting after them."—It remains to examine whether the latter inconvenience be not greater than the want of characters truly original, and manners strongly marked.

I could much wish that some person of talents would give himself the trouble of examining this question more at large, and placing before us all the advantages and disadvantages of the state of society among us, of the influence it has upon our characters, our genius, our taste, our works of every kind, our passions, our feelings, our modes of judging and acting. This would be a grand work to execute, a question worthy the investiga- tion of our best philosophers. In the interim,

while we are waiting for it to be taken up on the extensive ground I propose, let us examine some questions connected with it, mixing with them occasional remarks, particularly upon certain inconveniences which indisputably arise from this spirit of society, and from which it is impossible to secure ourselves.

In the first place, with regard to the characters and manners being less strongly marked among a people where society is carried to such a pitch of refinement, I cannot help supposing, that if a solitary philosopher, after having meditated very deeply in his retirement upon human nature, upon the faculties of our minds and bodies, were all at once to be transported into a fashionable circle at Paris, he would be at first extremely embarrassed, and his embarrassment would continue in proportion to the extent of his modesty, and diffidence in the illumination of his own mind. It must appear to him that there is no variety among us, that each one is the exact counterpart of the other; but the most curious circumstance of all would be, that it would be no easy matter for him to determine whether he were among persons of talent, or fools. Every one talking with the same gestures, having the same air and carriage, how would it be possible for him to distinguish, at the first glance, good sense from cold and senseless jargon? perhaps, overcome at last with the latter, he would be tempted to quarrel with himself that he could not enter into it; but this would not lead to his distinguishing the men

of sense from the fools. Not till after some experience and much reflection would he begin to feel the difference between real good-breeding and the mere affectation of it, between characters and inclinations, and ultimately between real conversation and jargon.

The truth of the fact is, that the very idea of polished society necessarily supposes the point of individual character to be somewhat blunted, and each person to contract a great degree of resemblance to the other. A very essential feature of good-breeding is to pay a certain deference to the general will and opinion, and not to live in a constant state of opposition to, and contention with, the rest of the company; because their sentiments do not exactly coincide with our own. Such a pliancy, as it may be justly termed, necessarily creates sameness of character, externally at least, to a considerable degree. This constitutes the essential difference between our refinement, on which we value ourselves so much, and the urbanity of the antients. They having to participate in the administration of public affairs, and having consequently more important objects to occupy their minds, had no time to fly from circle to circle in order to kill their time, consequently had no occasion to study that constant forbearance, that dissimulation of our own inclinations, so necessary where we would wish not to wound the vanity of others. From the moment that a man sets himself up in opposition to the general sentiments he

is considered as ill-bred and insupportable in society. Perhaps this is necessary, I will not pronounce decidedly to the contrary, but it is certain that it leads to the banishment of individual character, and that the consequent uniformity it occasions is a great parent of *ennui*. The effects then of that *ennui* are only to be counteracted by a perpetual change of scene, and hence comes that continual movement from place to place observable among the people of high ton at Paris, their being constantly on the wing from one circle to another, without finding any particular pleasure, or having any particular object in view in the change.

In the second place, for the same reasons, such refinement of society is adverse to genius, to lofty flights of the soul. In support of this hypothesis it is to be observed, that among us those who are really remarkable for strength of genius, cannot conform entirely to the shackles which our laws of good breeding would gladly impose upon them. Geniuses of an ordinary cast, who, if they had been left to pursue the bent of their natures, might have done things not undeserving of admiration, are wholly crushed under the burthen of these restraints, but never will a man of superior genius be seen with the mere tone and manner that prevails in general society; there will always be something in his whole appearance that will render his superiority evident. Could he indeed, or ought he to waste his time in studying all the minutiæ which

are required in a mere man of the world? what could be expected of any one who had patience to occupy himself above all other things with making a bow according to the prevailing mode?—I cannot refrain from advancing *en passant* a paradox which merits being nicely examined. It is that, in the present state of things, while the spirit of society among us tends to stifle genius, nothing is so favourable to its preservation as a defectiveness in some of the senses. For instance, by being extremely short-sighted, we should be precluded remarking a thousand little minutiæ in manners and carriage which consequently we could not be emulous of imitating. In the same way the ear, not being quick, would preclude distinguishing the difference of tones, and the person would be secured against trying to catch them. The genius therefore being more concentrated, would, even in the midst of society, preserve its strength, and be placed out of reach of the surrounding dangers.

In the third place, on taking a superficial view of the subject, it will appear as if nothing was more favourable to the progress of taste than the tone of society in question. Such a constant interchange of our judgment, of our modes of thinking and feeling on all occasions, ought naturally, as it should seem, to improve our judgment, and refine our taste. If however we examine the thing more closely, we shall find the reverse to be the case. Two inconveniences arise from the habit of living constantly in society. The first is, that we

remain frivolous and superficial, nothing affects us deeply, nothing interests us to an eminent degree, the sort of idleness inseparable from such a state enervates the soul while it blunts the feelings of the heart, and our minds lulled into a kind of lethargy are much better satisfied to judge every thing by chance, than to take the trouble of investigating any thing. The forcible and affecting sublimity of great things has no longer any power to touse us, our minds are set upon trifles, our taste becomes poor, petty and frivolous. The other inconvenience, and a still more dangerous and humiliating one is, that factitious tastes are established in every branch of literature and the arts;—tastes which have originated in the brain of some pedant, for there are pedants in all classes, in all trades, in all professions, and which are adopted by the multitude without any examination. Thus, nothing is more common among us, than to see a fool who has the perseverance to be constantly repeating the same thing for a certain time, believed at last, and his judgment taken as the law, not only by fools like himself, but by a vast number even of men of talents who dread the trouble of examining, and would nothave ventured to maintain their assertions with so much boldness and perseverance. Thus we see opinions the most arbitrary and ill-grounded pass into axioms, the reason of which must no longer be enquired into; thus folly erects edifices which good sense rejects, and time must at length destroy; thus certain reputations are established in

society equally brilliant with the vapours which we see lighted for a moment, but no less transient. Yet, while they endure, no circle dare pronounce upon any production of the day, whether it be in literature or the arts, whether it be a new dramatic piece or any other species of public amusement till their opinion has first been heard; and since it commonly happens that this leader of the ton is one of the greatest fools among the polite circles, the judgments are passed accordingly.

A third inconvenience might be mentioned, and perhaps a greater than either of the others, that persons of real talents, accustomed from their early years to receive their impressions from such persons, and having their tastes and judgments formed by those of the public, lose the *virginity*, if I may be allowed the term, of their ideas. Being confounded with those that they find established in every circle they visit, on them only are they formed, and we are thus deprived of the great advantages that a superior mind might confer upon the age by its discoveries, by the new points of view in which it might place a variety of objects. It is clear that great works, that productions of genius are rarely of the growth of the country where the spirit of society prevails over all the characters, all the affections. Genius is naturally wild, it loves to rove at large, and its energy and power gradually decline in proportion as it is tamed. On the other hand, as the Abbé Prevost has justly observed, little works of mere amusement, fugitive pieces,

essays, and other light productions flourish and abound, since the study of them forms a part of the routine of the day, and the discussing them is an important topic of conversation.

It is almost superfluous to add, that in such a country there is no time to have warm, strong and durable passions. Dissipation absorbs every thing, it makes the mind change the object of its attention at every moment, though without receiving pleasure from the new any more than the old ones. It belongs to the passions alone to develope genius and produce great and sublime things; of all vices perhaps lightness and frivolity is one of the most fatal, because it neutralizes the virtues, rendering them uncertain and useless; it is impossible to place any dependance upon a person who has no fixed principles or rule of conduct.

June, 1755.

Every one knows that mildewed corn has scarcely any husk, is black and makes bad bread, that it infects good corn, and that the dust of a single ear will spoil a whole field; that the scarcity of corn in the years 1660, 1693, 1698, and on some other occasions, which was almost general in France, was owing to this cause. Both the antients and the moderns have attributed the calamity to the effect of corrosive fogs, to parching vapours, which affect the corn at the time of its flowering and reduce it to a sort of ashes. Such is

the prejudice which has existed for three thousand years, and the precautions employed by the husbandmen against the mildew were all suggested by this theory. M. du Tillet, however, director of the money at Troyes, has set himself to examine the subject more closely, and thinks he has discovered that the mildew is an original disease of the corn, and that to prevent it the seed corn should be washed several times, before it is thrown into the ground. The effect of such washings he considers as so certain, that he says if two fields be sown with corn from the same stock, that used for one field having been washed, and the other not, the latter will be infected with the mildew while the former will be entirely free from it. M. du Tillet has just published his discoveries in a work which must be interesting to every body, since its object is one in which the whole human race is concerned; the manner of washing which this philanthropist recommends is to be given in a subsequent paper.

From this point I must digress to say a word of the interesting spectacle which the country presents when it is covered with corn. What sentiments arise in contemplating the provision made for the preservation of the human species, in viewing the labour of man, and the beneficence of heaven. I cannot help adverting to what is truly sublime, and to what is by no means so—examining what ought to affect us deeply and what scarcely ought to touch the surface of the soul—comparing our parterres so dressed out, so ornamented, with the

wild beauties of rustic nature, our *jets-d'eau* and cascades with the noble cataracts rushing down the sides of vast rocks which break their fall only to make them dash and foam with the greater violence, the stillness and silence of the caverns in the midst of these rocks with the busy bustle of our country houses, the solemn gloom and sacred horror of the vast forests, with our shady groves and smiling bowers, — how stupendous and sublime appear the works of nature! how petty in comparison the efforts of man!

Another reflexion suggested by the subject we are upon is, that for epidemic diseases, epidemic remedies should be devised; without them we may heal an individual but the mass will remain infected. M. du Tillet washes all the corn that is to be sown. The epidemic medicine, which is never practised by any people collectively, and which should be practised by all, would consist in first investigating thoroughly the nature of the disease, and then guarding against it by the mode of our diet, and by baths. There is not a monarch on the globe who might not, if he chose, be the greatest of all physicians, since it is in his power to change, by a word, the system of food among his subjects, and to construct public baths. I have no doubt that the ancients avoided many diseases merely by their practice of constantly using the bath, and that this remedy with a proper attention to diet, is the only system capable of stopping effectually the progress of any malady which is becoming daily

more and more general. *This article is by M. Diderot.*

The Academy of Dijon proposed as the subject of their prize last year the following question: *What is the origin of inequality among mankind? and is it authorized by the law of nature?* I know not to whom the prize was adjudged, but I doubt whether among all the competitors, any one was capable of writing an Essay that would bear the least comparison with that recently printed at Amsterdam, under the title of: *A Dissertation upon the origin and foundation of inequalities among mankind, by J. J. Rousseau, citizen of Geneva.* This piece is dedicated to the republic of Geneva, in a long dedication full of fire and eloquence. The famous question whether the arts and sciences have contributed to the advantage or injury of the human race, first gave occasion for M. Rousseau to display his extraordinary talents: A style at once simple and noble, full of clearness, energy and warmth; a masculine and affecting eloquence acquired him a high degree of reputation, and if he had always kept his imagination within bounds, he would have enjoyed, without any alloy, all the respect and consideration that a writer, zealous in the cause of truth and virtue, merits of his fellow-citizens. Even now this is not refused him by equitable judges, who know they cannot expect of any writer that he should be entirely free from defect.

The *Dissertation upon equality* is a sort of

sequel to that upon the sciences, and it seems evident that our author was first led by writing the latter to meditate upon the nature of man, and upon his vocation. His object is fine. Humankind, according to his ideas, as well as each individual of the species, has its different ages, by which, in the revolution of centuries, it proceeds from the weakness of infancy to the vigour of adolescence, and from thence through the same gradations as man to the decrepitude of old age; it is therefore the life of the species that M. Rousseau undertakes to describe. In the first part of his work he endeavours to give us just ideas respecting a state of nature, and in the second he examines by what series of means, of reflections, and actions, mankind have emerged from this state, have become civilized, and have formed themselves into societies, by which their character and constitution seem totally changed. He reproaches, with reason, all the philosophers who have meditated upon this important subject, with not having formed definite ideas of the state of nature, with having always confounded it with the social state, with having continually annexed to the state of nature ideas imbibed in a state of society. This may be ascribed more particularly to Hobbes and Puffendorf, nor have the greatest geniuses always been able to avoid that confusion and contraction of ideas which prevent their penetrating into the sanctuary of truth, and divining what we do not see, by what we do.

You will find a great deal of genius and pene-

tration in the meditations of the *Citizen*, but he has fallen again into some of the faults with which he has before been reproached. His views are grand, new, and philosophic, but his logic is not always correct, and the consequences and reflections which he draws from his opinions are often extravagant. Thence it happens that how great soever may be the pleasure derived from a book in which there is so much depth of thought and reflection, there is a want of justness in the thoughts which casts a cloud over the very truths he endeavours to find, and gives the reader many an uneasy feeling. It is a great secret in the art of writing for an author, not to shew an overweening attachment to his own systems and opinions, to assign them only the exact degree of probability attached to them. There is a boundary beyond which truth is no longer truth, and nothing is more contrary to its interests, and to the interest of those philosophers who profess to follow it, than a spirit of systematising.

Let us endeavour to examine, and to rectify if there be occasion, some of M. Rousseau's ideas; such an examination comes essentially within the object of these communications; it is an object which ought to be pursued zealously by all journalists. I cannot find a more useless set of people in the world than the makers of extracts. It is altogether idle to make extracts from good works, since they ought to be read entire; we ought not to be satisfied with a dry and insipid extract, which,

under pretence of giving the substance of the work, gives but a mere skeleton; and as to bad works, the sooner they are forgotten, the better. To make extracts at all, is therefore a sort of an impertinence, and it would be well if the journalists were prohibited speaking of a work whether good or bad, when they have nothing to say. They should not be allowed to enter upon a discussion of it, unless the views of things taken by the author they notice, have led him into making new and interesting observations which are worth presenting, and which may contribute to the instruction and entertainment of the public.

Let us return to M. Rousseau. According to him, the human species, emerged from barbarism, but still such as they came out of the hands of nature, are in a state of infancy. From thence, beginning to be civilized, to cultivate the earth, to unite in families and societies, they enter into the state of adolescence, into the vigorous state of the species. Families and societies then increasing, and states becoming more extensive, the arts and luxury are introduced, man declines gradually, and according as these causes act more or less rapidly, he comes at length to the old age, and finally to the decrepitude of the species.* Such are in few words our author's ideas, as far as I can understand them,

* A great error seems to have intruded itself here with regard to the analogy. The gradations of childhood, adolescence and old age pointed out, are perhaps, very applicable to the origin, progress, and decline of separate states, but they do not seem in any way to apply to the whole human species.

for they are but vaguely defined, as is indeed the case with the whole logic of the dissertation. Although, according to this system, we have fallen upon the least happy æra of the human species, that of its old age, it must be acknowledged that the idea is grand and fine. But let us guard against carrying it too far, as is the case sometimes with M. Rousseau, fearing lest truth may be transformed into a chimera, and eloquence into declamation.

"There is," says the citizen, "an age at which "each individual would gladly pause, but how de- "termine, O man! the age at which thou would'st "desire thy species to pause. Discontented with thy "present state, for reasons which announce to thy "posterity still greater cause of discontent, perhaps "thou would'st wish to go back; this sentiment, "however, which would be so flattering to past "ages, would be a severe reflection upon thy co- "temporaries, and give cause for shuddering to "those that are to come after thee." This appears mere declamation. Let us suppose with M. Rousseau, that the human species are at present in their old age, the period, for example, answering to sixty or seventy years in an individual, is it not evident that we cannot impute it as a crime to any man to be sixty years old? or is it less natural to be sixty than sixteen? What is no reproach then to an individual cannot be a reproach to the species. Perfectibility is the characteristic feature which distinguishes man above the rest of the animal creation. Man may be in a constant state of improvement,

while the brute comes out of the hands of nature with all the powers he ever can attain; powers that can never either be lessened or increased; the human species is constantly experiencing astonishing revolutions, according to which their happiness or misery are extended or diminished. A state of decrepitude is then to them as natural as a state of vigour; it may merit compassion, but it can never merit censure or reproach; who would reproach a man with not having the same vigour at sixty that he had at five-and-twenty?

There is no good in the universe without its concomitant evil; nature in giving to the human species the means of improvement, has also exposed it to the risk of deterioration. From the moment I am born, my destination is, like that of every thing which draws breath, to pass through different ages, through youth to arrive at manhood, and through manhood to old age, till I reach the termination of my existence, which is just as natural an event as the beginning of it. The human species is in the same situation. Suppose our youth to be past, that the arrangements of society, our manners of living, our habits, and a hundred other reasons, which M. Rousseau has enumerated very ably, has brought us to our old age, we are not, therefore, reprehensible, for it is a necessary consequence of having been young that we should grow old. It is singular that our author should use this argument to controvert those who make objections to his ideas upon the state of nature, and

not see how easily it may be turned against himself. "I know," says he, "I shall perpetually be told "that nothing could have been so miserable as man "in this state. But if it be true, as I think I have "sufficiently proved, that he could not, till after "many ages, have felt the desire, and been fur- "nished with the means of quitting it, to take "such a view of the matter is to arraign nature herself "and not him who constituted it thus." Let us retort the argument. "I know," I would say, "that "M. Rousseau is constantly repeating that no- "thing can be more miserable than the state in "which man at present finds himself. But if it "be true, as I think I have proved, that after "many ages and revolutions, it was impossible but "that he should find himself in such a state, to "reproach him with it, would be arraigning nature "and not him who constituted it thus."

Is it, however, perfectly true, that we are so much to be pitied for living in the old age of the human species? As there is no good in nature without its inconveniences, there is no evil that has not its allay and its remedies. Old age accompanied by reason and good sense, disencumbered of the idle pretensions which are almost always the companions of youth, and which afford such an abundant source of mortifications to it, is not even an evil When the human species was in its youth, it did not feel its happiness and its advantages, because it was scarcely more susceptible of reflection than the brute. At present that it is grown old, it has ac-

quired a habit of reflection which makes it sensible of its infirmities, and of what it has lost, but which also renders it much more alive to the blessings that remain to it. And suppose that our posterity are to be reduced to absolute decrepitude, their situation will not be so terrible as M. Rousseau supposes, since this state naturally brings with it an insensibility to its attendant evils. The human species in this last stage will be like those dotards who may be burdensome to society, but who are not the least so to themselves, because they are not the least aware of their own imbecility.

Any one who would give themselves the trouble of following M. Rousseau thus step by step, would have the satisfaction of reflecting with a deep and enlightened philosopher, but would find it always necessary to be upon his guard, lest he should be carried too far. Yet this defect is not without its advantages, as it procures the reader frequent opportunities of disciplining his mind into a justness of thinking, by rectifying and restraining within their due bounds the ideas of a mind ardent and impetuous, though fond of truth. And since there is nothing so interesting, and at the same time so instructive, as to meditate on man, we may often return to this dissertation and take it as the text for our reflections upon the most important of all subjects.

One reflection to which we are led is obvious. The Citizen of Geneva dilates much on the happiness of the savage life, but what does he know of

it. He complains with reason of our travellers who have observed it very superficially; it must be then from his own imagination that he takes his conceptions of the state. But we have as good reason to distrust the *reveries* of his imagination, as he to distrust the relations given by travellers; we are indeed more especially warranted in such a distrust, when we consider how much all his ideas are warped by a system. Under the influence of that sorceress, imagination can wrest every thing to its own purpose; it passes over all the ills incidental to a savage life, and transforms any trivial advantages that it may possess into the choicest blessings. In order to have a just idea of the lives led by savages, a person ought to have resided long among them; and in order to give a just description of them, he ought to have nothing in view but a desire of ascertaining the truth, not of passing a satire upon civilized life. There are two very philosophical articles in this dissertation which merit a careful examination, and to which I shall recur hereafter when I find a favourable opportunity. The one regards the origin of languages, the other the passion of love among savages. In the course of the dissertation, there are several notes upon different subjects, in one of which a comparison is drawn between the evils attendant upon the state of society such as it exists at the present moment, and those of savage life: this is a masterpiece of eloquence.

We have just been presented with a collection

of poëtry in two volumes, under the title of the *Lemonade Muse.* They are the productions of Madame Bourette, by trade, a seller of lemonade, and a poetess. They will amuse you with their folly and absurdity. Her *Lemonade Museship* has sung every object that fell in her way from the kings of France and of Persia to the water-carriers of Paris; there is not a man among our apprentice *beaux-esprits* but has his tribute. The fair authoress has encreased her publication by uniting with her poetry all the letters she ever received in her life; apropos of one from a certain M. Le Boeuf; she says it proves that a man should not always be judged by his name. This will give you an idea of the depth of thought and acuteness of wit that shine throughout the production.

August, 1755.

I have long wished for an interval when I might be able to introduce to your acquaintance a literary phænomenon which merits well to be known, particularly in a country where people are so fond of being amused, where jocularity and light raillery hold so extensive an empire over all ranks. This phænomenon is a tragedy which was printed at Rouen, and of which not above three or four copies have ever reached Paris. It is entitled *David and Bathsheba*, and is the production of M. Petit, Minister of the Parish of Mont-Chauvet in Lower Normandy. To give you an idea of this curious piece, and its still more curious author, I will

transcribe a letter which I had occasion to write upon the subject.

LETTER *to M. de S. L. at Luneville.*

"You are in the right, Sir, to enquire for news of our days of festivity, and to regret not having passed them among us. You would have played a part extremely well in a scene which took place at one of the Baron d'Holbach's Sunday-evening parties, and of which I am commissioned to give you an account, although I was unfortunately not present myself. I was on the road, and my carriage very perversely broke down at Soissons, so that it was impossible for me to get to Paris by the time I had proposed. It is this mischance which occasions me to have the honour of being delegated as the historian of the illustrious minister of Mont-Chauvet;—all the rest having been actors in the farce, I alone was judged sufficiently impartial to give a fair statement of the matter between the one side and the other.

"But I must go back to the fountain head, and after the example of my brethren, the modern historians, begin by giving a portrait of my hero. This I am the better enabled to do since, like them, I have never seen the personage I am about to describe. I must, however, before I begin, bespeak your indulgence, and if my portrait be not a *chef-d'œuvre* of antitheses, recollect that it is not every one who has the power of producing them. Our Minister who bears for name the *Abbé Petit*,

(Little) is not very little by nature, though he is so by name. This is not I think much amiss for a beginning. He is young, and the most striking feature in his face is a remarkably long nose. The predominant qualities in his character are extreme absurdity, and a vanity which knows no bounds. Easily flattered, and as easily wounded, he alternately grows pale with delight, and reddens with anger; his nose is in perpetual action either to snuff up the incense continually lavished by those who are turning him into ridicule, but which he receives as sterling gold, or to testify the contempt in which he holds his censors and his enemies; of the latter he conceives himself to have a great number, since it is impossible but that this should be the case with a person of such transcendent genius.

"Last summer the *Philosopher of the Mountain*,* met one day in the Luxembourg an old friend of his, the Abbé Basset, professor of philosophy in the College d'Harcourt, and with him the Abbé Petit our minister of Mont-Chauvet. Like all geniuses of a similar stamp, this same M. Petit loves very much to hear himself talk, and a general conversation was immediately commenced among the three. 'I am extremely unfortunate, said our hero, 'in 'being minister of Mont-Chauvet, 'tis the most 'melancholy place under the sun; my talents are 'entirely lost there, since there is not a man of any

* This was a name given by the society of literati to M. Diderot, because he lived at this time upon the hill of Saint Geneviève.

'information in the country except myself, no 'society at all, the only man one can speak to, and 'that merely for want of something better, is the 'schoolmaster, who is but a peasant dressed in 'black. I am however for a time emancipated 'from it, and am rejoiced at having made an ac- 'quaintance, Sir, with a man of such reputation; 'I shall be transported at having your opinion upon 'a madrigal, I have just written of about seven 'hundred lines.'—'*A madrigal of seven hundred* '*lines!*' exclaimed the philosopher, 'and upon 'what subject?'—'Tis upon a little misfortune 'which happened in my family,' said the poet with a smile, 'only that my female servant has had a 'child by my footman. This has given ample 'scope to my muse as you shall see.'—So saying, he drew from his pocket a large roll of paper, at which M. Diderot, cruelly alarmed, said: 'Indeed, 'Sir, excuse me, but I must arraign you severely 'for wasting genius like yours upon such a subject. 'With such talents, a man should rather apply 'himself to writing a tragedy, than trifle away his 'time upon madrigals. Permit me therefore to 'decline listening to your verses, till you have 'written a tragedy.'—'You are in the right,' answered the Minister, 'I am indeed too timid.'

"Thus did the Sage of the Mountain get rid of the madrigal; but what was his astonishment at seeing his priest of Mont-Chauvet arrive about a fortnight ago, bringing with him the tragedy of *David and Bathsheba.* There was no possibility of

flying off, he must go through the ceremony of hearing it read; to render the thing therefore as amusing as possible, it was determined that the reading should take place at the Baron d'Holbach's Sunday evening. Figure to yourself the delighted author seated in the midst of a circle of near twenty banterers all ready to play him off, and complete the turning his head if any thing was wanting to it. The *Citizen of Geneva* alone, with a probity proof against every thing, was determined to speak out plainly, and he did it so effectually, that the poet has conceived an irreconcilable aversion to him. I have no doubt that you will be infinitely amused with reading *David and Bathsheba* yourself, but you would have been much more delighted with the criticisms made upon it while he was holding forth, and more than all with the manner in which the orator parried the criticisms. In the preface he states his reasons for not having exhibited Bathsheba in the bath upon the stage, and vindicates himself from any intention of imitating the style of the great Corneille, between which and his own he said people found a strong resemblance; but he solemnly assures us that he never had any intention of being a plagiarist; he also vindicates some rhymes to which the Citizen of Geneva made exceptions. The whole of this preface is aimed at our society, with whom he was exceedingly displeased, though he endeavoured to dissemble his displeasure.

"The reading began, the company, ranged round the room, listened attentively; M. de La

Condamine had even taken the cotton from his ears that he might hear the better, but his patience was exhausted in the very first scene. In the second, David appears and complains that he is tormented by love night and day, that it prevents his sleeping. He has moreover a thousand things to occupy him, he has many new enemies, 'four kings, *Vive 'Dieu*, formerly my friends.'—'*Vive Dieu!*' exclaimed M. de La Condamine, 'and why not *Ventre Dieu?*' then replacing the cotton in his ears he hastily quitted the room. 'Curious,' said the orator coldly, 'a man of letters and does not know 'that *Vive Dieu* is the great Hebrew oath.' You will have some idea of the extent to which according to his ideas, *poetical licence* may be carried, when I tell you that in order to suit things to his own purpose, he makes no scruple of transforming masculines into feminines, and singulars into plurals, not thinking it necessary however, that this transformation should be continued throughout the piece, but using the same words alternately in either gender, or either number, as suits the occasion. This sort of game was too excellent for our wits not to aim some of their arrows at it, though the severity of their criticisms was always mingled with a sufficient quantity of extravagant eulogium. The poet's vanity was notwithstanding cruelly wounded, and he quitted the society in no very good humour.

"Three days after, he met one of the party who had been his champion through thick and

thin, as had been agreed beforehand. He complained to him very much and said; 'If I were 'often in the company of these gentlemen, I should 'be led at length to suspect that my verses are poor; 'I am well convinced however to the contrary, and 'if they would only examine their own remarks 'with as much severity as they examined my tra-'gedy, it would soon appear where the poverty 'really lies. For the rest I am little annoyed by 'their criticisms, I am not servilely attached to my 'verses such as I read them, I have written my 'whole piece in triplets, that I may sacrifice a line 'any where, without having the trouble of seeking 'for one to replace it.' This is a fact, it will afford some idea of the genius of our Abbé, I give the trait exactly as I received it, and have only to remark that nothing is so precious to me as a character thus frankly original. Our friend assured him that the society were all deeply impressed with admiration of his talents, but he was not quite dupe enough to believe it. 'I saw them laughing 'many times, while I was reading,' said the poet, 'and men do not laugh at a tragedy when they 'really think well of it.'—It was very true that one of the party, M. de Gauffecourt, holding his hands over his face as if in an attitude of great attention was endeavouring to hide a laugh:—'You 'laugh, Sir,' said the reader eagerly.—'*I* laugh, 'Sir,' replied the other with a very serious air, 'I 'never could laugh in my life.'—'In short,' said the Abbé to our friend, 'I see the thing clearly;

'these gentlemen dread works of genius, which 'they think may attract the public attention; they 'have nothing but their Encyclopedia in their 'heads, and are afraid lest my success should inter- 'fere with theirs; but the public will know how 'to render to each one his due.'

It was under the impression of these sentiments that our charming poet returned into Lower Normandy, whence he soon wrote a letter to his friend, the Abbé Basset mentioned above, a copy of which I have the honour of enclosing. You will there see his opinion of our society. In order to make it perfectly intelligible to you, I must observe, that he had placed at the head of his tragedy an epistle dedicatory in verse to Madame de Pompadour, which began with this extraordinary line: *Return into nothing, ye race of beggars!* The object of this injunction was to condemn the race of poets who write flattering dedications, in the hope of getting money; and he afterwards apostrophizes them in the following sentiment: *No true son of Apollo, unless he rhyme gratis.* The beginning had so singular an appearance, considering to whom it was addressed, that some persons, who really apprehended that the Abbé might draw himself into difficulties, exhorted him to suppress it. He, however, conceived that this advice arose from jealousy, lest he should get into favour with Madame de Pompadour, and it was left standing as the advanced guard of the tragedy. But to the letter to M. Basset.

From Mont-Chauvet.

" 'I quitted Paris, my dear Sir, deeply im-
'pressed with your goodness. I hastened my de-
'parture from a place where I began to experience
'much satisfaction, but was afraid I was burden-
'some to some people. Let us say the truth; they
'took offence at a piece where they thought they
'saw beauties which it is very possible the public
'may not see; they envied me a *je ne sçai quoi*
'which nature, or chance, has lavished upon me.
'If my presence was irksome to them, they must
'have rejoiced at my departure; and, as you well
'know, my dear Abbé, there is no proposition,
'however little consistent with decorum, that they
'have not cast in my teeth to induce me to throw
'my piece into the fire. I leave them then all the
'leisure possible to make verses; to build tragedies,
'the representation of which shall be solicited,
'and a certain number of persons hired to applaud
'them. I shall probably not read them; how
'should they find me out in so remote a spot? I
'was told, before my departure, that what piqued
'them more than any thing was the epistle ad-
'dressed to the Marchioness of Pompadour; that
'they could not digest the *Return, vile beggars!*
'and have served up the minister of Mont-Chauvet
'with all kinds of sauce. Be this as it may, in
'the intercourse which I had with them they
'thought to make me their dupe; and indeed they
'succeeded to a certain degree, because they abused
'the frankness of my character. But what have I

'lost, unless it be a loss to think my piece more 'worthy to see the day than I had even dared to 'hope. It does actually see it, printed on very fine 'paper, and sold at thirty-six sous. It is printed 'with the approbation of the magistrates, who com- 'municated it to a Doctor of the Sorbonne, and he 'says he has read it with the greatest pleasure. 'As he is well versed in the Holy Scriptures, he 'admired very much the manner in which I have 'treated my subject. The moment then of the 'death or life of my offspring is arrived; the pub- 'lic, who commonly see pretty clear, will dissect 'it in proportion as they understand it. If it does 'not please them, I shall make no appeal against 'their judgment; but I shall not be discouraged, 'I shall only study how to do better. As long as my 'vein will flow, I protest to you, my dear Abbé, 'that nothing will be able to stop it. M. Diderot 'complained that there were not incidents enough 'in my piece, and that the greater part of the inci- 'dents were not represented upon the stage, which 'I should call having the stage somewhat too 'mute. This, I own, is a defect; and I feel it so: 'as the subject is a sacred one, I could not do bet- 'ter: but I have made amends for the natural dry- 'ness which some of the recitals must necessarily 'occasion by a very happy versification. This is 'not, however, the place for entering upon a criti- 'cism of the play; I shall proceed therefore to say, 'that I have begun a second, which will not be 'liable to the same objection, and which I trust

'therefore will be complete. When it is finished, 'I shall criticise it very severely, as I did my 'first. As I am not guided by any ambition to 'have my piece applauded on the stage, or by mo- 'tives of interest, occupying myself in this way 'only to amuse my solitude, I shall bring this se- 'cond piece with me, ready printed, by means of 'which I shall not again be exposed to the neces- 'cessity of reading my manuscript before people 'who are more disposed to laugh than to be af- 'fected by it; or who feign to applaud, without 'knowing any thing about the connection of the 'scenes, or even what is, and what is not, a rhyme. 'I have now, my dear Abbé, to inform you, that 'I shall send you a copy of my *David and Bath- 'sheba*, as a present, with some others as presents 'to different people, which I will request the favour 'of you to remit to them. I believe that you will 'receive them next week, but I shall send you a 'line to signify when they are sent; thus shall I 'put you to the expense of postage for two letters. 'Be so good as to acknowledge the receipt of the 'present, and say whether you will allow me to 'consider myself as your debtor for them. Excuse 'the length of this letter, I expect it from your 'indulgence. I write to M. Freron, and send him 'two copies, one for himself and the other for Ma- 'dame, his wife, both free gifts. You see that I 'do things liberally, and do not mind about six- 'and-thirty sous when I think it right.—Adieu, 'my dear Abbé. I have the honour to be, with

'the sentiments you know I entertain for so excel-
'lent a friend as yourself, your most humble, most
'obedient servant, 'LE PETIT.'"

"Now surely you cannot deny that a few hundreds of such letters would form a most choice collection. To the end that you may feel the full force of every part of the above, it is proper you should be informed that the passage in which he says that he leaves the field open to others to make verses, to build up tragedies, alludes to M. de Margency. The minister of Mont-Chauvet had been made to believe that he was a poet by profession, and that he would find in him a dangerous competitor; so that there was no sort of servility which he did not practise towards him, though conceiving at the same time a most determined hatred of him as a supposed rival. After the reading of the play the two poets had a long dispute upon their respective merits, which ended in a sort of literary challenge. M. de Margency said he was actually employed in writing a tragedy upon the story of Nebuchadnezzar, which he considered as a very delicate and difficult one to treat, and if the poet of Mont-Chauvet would undertake the same subject they might bring what they had done every week to that assembly, and submit it to their judgment and criticisms. To this our Norman agreed; but he seemed afterwards to think better of the matter, and not being particularly pleased with the censors proposed, perhaps afraid too of his antagonist being more than his match, he

thought proper to set off for Normandy only three days after this memorable sitting. M. de Margency, notwithstanding, wrote a scene of his tragedy, and sent it to his competitor with a very fine dedication. I present you with both, and I think they will afford you infinite entertainment. Now judge whether the days of festivity at Paris have not been productive of some entertainment; for my part, when I returned to Paris on the Monday, I found our friends all so intoxicated with the follies of the minister of Mont-Chauvet, that I doubt much whether he in quitting them did not leave his mantle behind him." *

Our literature has just been enriched with a work singular in its kind, *Memoirs of Madame de Staal*, in 2 vols. 8vo.† They have met with astonishing success, and are every way deserving of it. Excepting the prose of M. de Voltaire, I do not know of any in our language equal to that of Madame de Staal. An astonishing fluency, a light and elegant touch, a series of reflections at once refined, novel and true, a warmth always well sustained

* The letter of M. de Margency, with the scene of his *tragedy of Nebuchadnezzar*, though given in the French, are omitted here, since even the follies of the poet of Mont-Chauvet could hardly excuse the treating a sacred subject with so much levity; and even if this were not the case, the keenness of the wit and satire must unavoidably be in a great measure lost in a translation.—*Translator.*

† The reader is cautioned against confounding the *Madame de Staal*, here mentioned, with another celebrated lady of nearly the same name, now living. The subject of the Memoirs in question was a very different person; and, as the reader will soon perceive, has long ceased to exist.—*Translator.*

without ever becoming unnatural, are the characteristics of these Memoirs. The merit of the style is so much the greater, as the history which forms the basis of the work has nothing in it very interesting; so that the whole charm rests on those graces which the fair author knows so well how to spread over every production of her pen. Here then we have a model for all who undertake to write Memoirs: they may fairly judge of their own greater or less degree of merit, in proportion as they approach to, or deviate from, the style of the work before us. It is from studying this book that a writer will learn how the most trifling details, things really in themselves very unimportant, may be rendered highly interesting; it is here that they may learn the art, if indeed it be an art that can be learnt, of never saying more than is necessary, and of saying every thing in the most appropriate manner. These Memoirs will also be of infinite utility to young persons who, being by their birth or situation destined to live in the world, have an interest in early acquiring the habits of polished society, a science so difficult to be defined, so little stable in its principles, where so much is the result of feeling and so little of reason, whose first principle indeed is always to be changing. I am therefore well persuaded that a pedant of the university, or a good plodding merchant absorbed in the petty details of calculation, who, after having read the *Memoirs of Madame de Staal*, should see my eulogium, would be very much disposed to

think my head turned. Indeed, however brilliant has been their success in the polite world, I cannot suppose that they will ever become popular in the streets of St. James, or St. Denis.

Madame de Staal who in her maiden state was Mademoiselle de Launay, died five years since at Sceaux at a very advanced age. Born without a name, without fortune, and almost without resources, chance offered her an asylum in a convent at Rouen where she received what we call the best education possible, although our best mode of educating children is still very bad. This education however brought forward her mind and talents, and laid the foundation of her future troubles. Persons endowed with superior qualities, and especially with a great and elevated soul, are very much to be pitied when they are thrown upon the world destitute of fortune. Incapable of bending to the yoke of independence and meanness, obscurity would suit them much better; their happiness would have been far more effectually secured if, without cultivating the talents bestowed on them by nature, their merits had never been known either to themselves or to others. It is true that superior merit will commonly in the end triumph over all obstacles, will become known, will be acknowledged, and receive the homage due to it; but will the enjoyment of this triumph and the consideration it brings with it, repay the troubles, the mortifications, the humiliations through which the mind has passed in arriving at it, perhaps for

a long series of years?—not to mention the numberless discouragements which the modesty inseparable from true merit daily produces.

Mademoiselle de Launay losing the respectable friends who had charged themselves with her education, and who from pure love indulged till they almost spoilt her, passed through a variety of troubles and mortifications, till at length she was established in the house of the Duchess de Maine, as her Grace's waiting-woman. Judge how much, in such a situation, she was in her proper place; I would not on any account deprive you of the pleasure of reading in the memoirs themselves the account of her *début*, and with what dexterity she acquitted herself of her functions; the account will delight you beyond measure. A letter which she had occasion to write to M. de Fontenelle was much handed about, and became as it were, the fabrick of her future reputation. By degrees she acquired the confidence of the Duchess de Maine, but did not on that account find the disgusts arising from her subaltern situation at all abated. She had a considerable share in the conspiracy of her mistress against the Regent Duke of Orleans and was sent with her to the Bastille. Here she conducted herself with unparallelled firmness, and shewed the most faithful attachment to the Duchess; she was released the last of the party. But notwithstanding her eminent merit and unshaken fidelity, notwithstanding the great reputation she acquired in the world, it was not without

much difficulty that she at length arrived at the honour of being companion to the Duchess. She afterwards married M. de Staal an officer in the Swiss guards, and Marshal of the camp; she continued however to live at Sceaux where she died.

It would be ridiculous to give extracts from a work which you will read more than once with great delight; I shall content myself with only noticing some of the principal characters given in it. Our sketchers of portraits would do well to become the scholars of Madame de Staal; hers are commonly given in three lines, but with an amplitude and truth really astonishing. She constantly narrates, never stops to make remarks of compliments or censure upon any one, yet presents them to the reader with such a singular art and dexterity that he cannot fail of seeing their characters instantly. She says nothing but what is handsome of the Duchess de Maine, yet it is impossible not to feel indignation at that Princess's conduct towards her, nor can we at the end of the Memoirs entertain any sentiment of respect for the Duchess, although none of the littlenesses which we know formed a part of her character are ever touched upon. Let us hear what our author says of her reception at Sceaux when she was liberated from the Bastille, where she had given so many forcible proofs of attachment to the house of Maine. "I arrived at "Sceaux" she says, "in the evening. The Duchess "was then in the garden, I hastened to meet her; "when she saw me: *Ah, here is Mademoiselle de*

" *Launay*, she exclaimed, *I am very happy to see* " *you!*—I approached, she embraced me, and pur- " sued her way."—

By what is said of the Cardinal de Polignac you will see that he was a feeble minded man and a thorough poltroon, a specious talker if you please, but not eloquent, for true eloquence cannot exist without firmness and courage. The character of the Duchess de la Ferté, in the first volume, is so original, so true, and so comic, that it might be brought upon the stage with the happiest effect. As a specimen how Madame de Staal paints men of whom she has occasion to speak *en passant*, let us advert to her sketch of the first president, M. de Mesmes, " He was a great courtier, but an in- " significant man, agreeable in society, weak, " timid, full of those defects which assist a man " to please and prevent his being useful." What a picture!

The great hero of these Memoirs is, according to my taste, M. Maisonrouge, Lieutenant to the King at the Bastille, who fell in love with Mademoiselle de Launay but was rejected by her. The faithful character here given of a man with an upright mind, but a confined understanding, with a simplicity of heart and an honesty above all conception, is so touching and so pathetic that it is impossible not to feel the greatest interest for him. This man, of a stamp so very uncommon, died with chagrin upon Mademoiselle Launay's leaving her prison.

It remains to say a few words respecting the lovers of our heroine. She represents the Marquis de Silly as a very superior man, whom she passionately loved, but was not beloved by him; yet however amiable he might appear in her eyes, she does not succeed in making him appear so to her readers; his letters, some of which she has given, are harsh, dry and pedantic. In fact I have been assured that M. de Silly was by no means a pleasing or amiable character, and little attractive either in person or mind; he was an insupportable pedant, and by nature ambitious. It was this last feature of his character that at length turned his head, when in a fit of phrenzy he threw himself out of the window. The Chevalier de Menil, another of Mademoiselle de Launay's lovers, whose history you will find, was according to the opinion of all who knew him, the most awkward and insupportable of mankind, equally disagreeable in his person and in his mind; his conduct towards his mistress shews him one of the most paltry and worthless of beings. Yet he was the man who was preferred to the honest worthy Maisonrouge. Madame de Staal appears to have been by no means handsome, and there are people who say that she was not pleasant in company. Perhaps those who are extremely desirous of attention themselves, finding her much their superior, would take exception to her; it is very certain, and this her memoirs fully attest, that she was a woman of great talents, and a highly cultivated mind. She was somewhat of a coquet,

as appears plainly from her own confession. A female friend said to her one day; "Will you be "very sincere in writing your Memoirs upon the "chapter of your love affairs?—Shall we be pre- "sented with a full detail of them?"—"It is only "my bust that I give," replied Madame de Staal.

M. Rouquet, a painter of portraits in enamel, a Member of the Royal Academy of Painting, has just favoured the world with a pamphlet, entitled, *The State of the Arts in England.* A title so pompous would not be ill-applied to the work of a philosopher upon such a subject;—and it certainly is a subject not trifling or insignificant. M. Rouquet's pamphlet is only a simple vindication, rather in the manner of our descriptions of the *Curiosities at Paris,* than a critical and analytical account of what he undertakes to describe. He has, however, scattered here and there some good and useful observations; he reproves, by the way, the Abbé Leblanc's *Letters upon the English*; indeed, the harsh and insolent tone of that work has given great offence to all reasonable people. The opinion of the author upon portrait painting, and the choice of the moment for catching the likeness demands some discussion. He says that the painter ought to choose a moment when the countenance is perfectly tranquil, avoiding in his portrait every thing like a forced attitude, or too much appearance of movement, because, says he, every thing of that kind displeases, when it has been seen for a longer

time than it could have continued in nature. A smile, for example, would, he observes, be disagreeable in nature if it were perpetual; the painter therefore who introduces it into a portrait does a thing manifestly absurd. I cannot assent to that opinion; on the contrary, I think that the painter who should confine himself to such rules, would make the mask of a man, not his picture. The merit of the artist consists in animating the canvas, in giving life and thought to his picture, and he should choose his moment accordingly. The man who is meditating deeply and the man who is in a state of perfect indolence of mind, a perfect absence of thought, are both completely tranquil, the same attitude may be given to both; but how poor and dull must the genius of that painter be, who would not by the different expression of the features mark the great difference that there is between them. The countenance of a person who has any intellect varies at every moment, 'tis for the painter to choose the moment which will produce the happiest effect in the picture; one will always be more advantageous than another, though all may be good if the painter knows how to give truly that which he has chosen. I should then say; *There is Mr. such a one, doing such a thing.* But, says M. Rouquet, you contemplate the portrait for a much longer time than the attitude could continue in nature, and the agreeable imposture of the art disappears. To this I answer, that if I contemplate a portrait for a longer time

than the attitude can last, it is only with a view to examining how far the imposture of the art may be carried, and I then recollect at every moment that it is *such a one doing such a thing*, and examine how far the painter has accomplished what is required of him. If I did not think of the art, and the perfection of the imposture, I should scarcely look at the portrait, because, however strong the resemblance, I know well that the original is still more so, and would give the preference to seeing him; the art can only fix the attention from the associated idea of the charm of imitation.

One word more to our charming poet of Mont-Chauvet. He has printed his tragedy of *Belshazzar*, with a preface, super-excellent in its way, and is now actually employed in writing a third piece. "I am young," he says, "I have courage, and if "I do but continue to rise higher at every flight "I take, I hope to attain a height at last sufficient "to satisfy the vanity of any author, who has not "more than his due portion. In the proper histo-"rical course of things my Belshazzar is subse-"quent to my David and Bathsheba."—But his Belshazzar is not half so amusing as his David and Bathsheba, or else a second of the kind will not pass at all. Let him beware the third.

September, 1755.

The French Academy about a week ago elected the Abbé de Boismont to the seat vacant by the

death of the Bishop of Mirepoix, whose eulogium you will find in the tomb of the Sorbonne. Foreigners who do not know that every thing is done here by intrigue and cabal, must be very much surprized to see obscure people, who have never printed any thing, or shewn talents of any kind that could entitle them to be considered as literary characters, admitted into the Academy, and introduced only upon the recommendation of persons as obscure as themselves, who have very gratuitously dubbed them *beaux-esprits.*—It must, I say, surprize foreigners very much to see men of this description admitted into the Academy, while persons of such known talent and high reputation as a Diderot, and a Piron are excluded; not to mention that there are numbers besides who without being on a parallel with those two distinguished geniuses, are very much the superiors of the new Academician.

Whatever comes from the pen of M. de Voltaire, is valuable in some point of view or other. We therefore collect here even his very notes, and I send you one written by him not long since to Madame de Monrevel, who last year became a Carmelite.

"Very edifying things are read to you, Madam, in the Convent of the Carmelites, and I do not doubt but they serve to keep alive your devotion. If you are not yet convinced of the power of grace, you must, at least, be convinced of the

power of destiny. It has made me quit Cirey which I had taken so much pains to embellish,—it has made you quit your seat, when you had rendered it a more charming abode than ever,—it has made Madame du Chatelet end her days in Lorraine,—it has conducted me to the shores of the lake of Geneva,—it has planted you in the Convent of the Carmelites. Thus does it sport with us mortals who are but moving atoms submitted to the general laws of the universe;—laws which scatter us about in the great shock of events which we can neither foresee, prevent, or understand, and of which we yet believe ourselves sometimes the masters. I bless this same destiny that your children are happily provided for. I wish you, Madam, all possible happiness, if happiness is a thing ever to be found, or if not, at least tranquillity insipid as that may appear; above all I wish you health, which is the greatest of all blessings though one that is too little valued. Honour me always with your friendship. The wheels of this great machine the universe, are interlocked together in such a manner as to leave me little hope of ever seeing you again, but a tender regard for you will always be the cherished inmate of my heart."

The fifth volume of M. de Buffon's grand work was published about a month ago. It contains the Natural History of the Sheep, the Goat, the Swine, and the Dog, by M. de Buffon, and an anatomical description of them by M. d'Aubenton;

this latter eminently possesses the most essential requisites for such an undertaking, fidelity and accuracy. The part in which M. de Buffon is concerned, you will read with that innate pleasure, which the beauty and elevation of his style cannot fail to produce; for, with all due respect to M. de Condillac and the axioms he lays down, I must be of opinion that if a man would wish his works to be read, he must know how to write. Cold and heavy reasonings be they ever so well digested and methodical, will be buried in the dust of libraries, while he who writes in an eloquent style, even though he advance systems that may prove fragile, though faults may have escaped him, though he may have fallen into errors which the great light of truth has afterwards corrected,—such a writer will for ever rest in the hands of all persons of taste and discernment. If I were not so fond of poetry, I might perhaps say that there is too much of it in the description of the dog, and severe critics will not fail to make this a subject of reproach to the author. His pompous eulogium of the dog, without whose aid man would never have ventured to attempt the conquest of wild beasts, will be pronounced by them not sufficiently philosophic. The rank also which M. de Buffon assigns to the different species of dog will perhaps be thought liable to exception; it is not very obvious why the shepherd's dog is placed at their head. We certainly ought to be very cautious of giving conjectures for certainties, and philosophic suppositions for incontestable truths.

I cannot forbear concluding this article with

an anecdote, which the Count de Fitz-James related to me the other day; and which does no less honour to M. de Buffon than his writings. When the first volumes of his Natural History appeared, the Count observed that one of his footmen watched him very narrowly as he was reading them, and the same thing being repeated several times he was tempted to enquire the reason. The servant in reply asked him whether he was much pleased with the work, and whether in general it was much approved?—M. de Fitz-James said that it met with the most brilliant success. "Heaven be "thanked," said the man, "for indeed, Sir, M. de "Buffon does so much good among us inhabitants "of Monbard, that we cannot help wishing the "greatest success to his works."—Monbard is the name of a seat belonging to M. de Buffon, in the province of Burgundy, where he passes a great part of the year.

The History of Genevieve, by the Countess de Revel. This history is asserted to be true, and indeed appears to be so. The fair authoress is just dead at only twenty-six years of age; she was a woman of considerable talents, but her stile and taste were not yet absolutely formed.

Those who are unhappy and those who possess hearts of sensibility are formed for each other, and that fate which presides over all never fails to bring them together. How far soever they may be locally separated their sentiments and their wants prove an irresistible attraction which nothing

can retain. It is natural that those who are in want or affliction should seek assistance or consolation, and hearts of real kindness, moved by the least appearance of distress, soon by their eager sympathy draw from the sufferers all the circumstances that occasion their sorrow. The two Chevaliers de L'Aigle, formed with hearts of that delightful texture, often found opportunities of exercising their benevolence in moments when they least expected it. Seated once upon the Boulevards near the close of day, a young lad came and sat down at the other end of the bench where they were. He appeared but just past the age of childhood, his countenance was pretty and interesting, and he seemed overwhelmed with the deepest affliction. This was sufficient to attract the attention of the Messieurs de L'Aigle. They remarked that the objects which occasioned his distress seemed connected with a house directly opposite to him, since his looks were pepetually directed towards it. From his age they surmised that some quarrel,, perhaps with his father or his tutors, had prompted him to fly, in the dread of severe punishment, and under this idea they offered him their mediation with an air the best calculated to inspire him with confidence. Their goodness affected him still more deeply: "I "am not accustomed," said he, "to meet with "persons who interest themselves for me. Simple "curiosity perhaps engages you to enquire my fate, "but there is nothing in it; at least it must seem "so trivial a matter to you, that it is not worth "mentioning."

The sound of his voice so much sweeter than is usually to be heard in a youth of that age; the abundance of tears that streamed down the mourner's cheeks, the attributes commonly of the weaker sex; an air of embarrassment which seemed to arise from wearing an unusual dress, soon led the gentlemen to suspect that their companion instead of being of their own sex was a woman in disguise. They immediately hinted their suspicions, which were instantly confirmed by a frank confession of the truth accompanied by deep sighs and sobs. Grief takes away the power of feigning; she had no interest to conceal her secret, and if she had desired it, her affliction was too great to admit of dissimulation. When they pressed her to make them acquainted with her reasons for wearing such a disguise, she hesitated for a long time whether she should comply, nor till the night was perfectly come on could she assume resolution to speak; day seems to increase embarrassment by making it evident. At length she began:

"I am," said she, "the daughter of an inhabitant of Bondi, who is at present gardener at Guermande. My father married me against my inclination; I loved another, but I was too young to own it and resist my parents. This first misfortune was short, I soon became a widow, and thought myself from that moment at liberty to make the lover I adored happy, but my father in the sharpest manner refused his consent to my marriage. Barrat, the young man whom I loved so tenderly, was

poor, but my heart could only think of the delights it expected in sharing the troubles of an object so dear. It is difficult to hear the voice of reason when the tortured heart is always combating it. I resolved to fly with my lover, and we swore to unite our fates in marriage the first opportunity. Satisfied with this engagement, I considered myself rather as following my husband than flying my father. Scarcely were we left to ourselves when we found it impossible to repress our transports, and I was as guilty as I could be. My tenderness was all that I could urge to excuse my fault. Alas! I did not feel the error I committed till my happiness was gone for ever: we are never truly sensible of our faults till they render us miserable. When I quitted my father's house I had some money, but it was all lavished away in consequence of the fatal delusion which prevented my seeing any thing. Scarcely did we begin to feel the pressure of want, when I perceived that my lover seemed more desponding under it than myself; it only grieved me upon his his account, but it was too evident that he had not the same feeling towards me.

"We at length agreed to come to Paris and endeavour to gain a livelihood by singing about the streets: this was an occupation not new to him, and it was sufficient for me that he wished me to join in it. Sometimes we sung together, sometimes separately. One miserable day when we had gone to different quarters, Barrat did not return home in the evening. I passed the night in the most cruel

anxiety, there was no accident, however frightful, that I did not fear might have befallen him. Several days were passed in the same torments, till at length I began to have a sad presentiment that I was deserted by him. I now recollected a thousand marks of his coldness which at the time passed unnoticed; I was always too much devoted to him to perceive that he was estranged from me. But hoping to recal his love if I could rejoin him, and recollecting that he had told me his father was a soldier in garrison at Givet, I thought I should perhaps find him there, or at least learn some tidings of him. The distance, though great, could not deter me; the object by which I was attracted rendered every thing possible, and I departed. I made the journey on foot, for I had no means of making it in any other way, and my only regret was that it delayed me so long. But alas! for what a sorrowful purpose did I take all this trouble; it was but to learn how cruelly Barrat had deceived me, nobody at Givet knew of such a man as his father. This treason was a sad earnest to me of what I might still expect. I returned to Paris in greater despair than I quitted it, yet my love was not diminished; I wandered about the streets seeking my false lover with as much eagerness as if I had been assured that the moment of our re-union would be one of as great transport to him as to me.

"My perseverance was for an instant rewarded; I met him at length, his mother and sister being with him. Nothing could stop me; neither

the fear of being rejected, nor the ridicule to which I must expose myself; I caught him in my arms; I overwhelmed him with caresses, before he had the power of repelling me. He pretended at first not to know me, but afterwards fearing lest I should betray him further, he took me aside to make me feel the danger of such a public exposure, and appointed me to meet him the next day in a remote place which he named. The ungrateful creature knew his power over me but too well; I obeyed, and repaired to the rendezvous. I was there sometime before him; he came, however, at length, but it was to deceive me. He lost me as much as he could among turnings and windings with which I was wholly unacquainted, and then abandoned me to my despair,—left me forlorn, without hope, almost without resource. I will not dwell upon the state in which I then was; it is easy to be imagined, and the horror I feel at the recollection is so great, that it almost deprives me of the power of speech. I soon, however, conceived a project which I hoped might recal him. What he had said of his mother inspired me with the idea of seeking her out, and endeavouring to interest her in my fate. I disguised myself as a man, and in the character of a third person who interested himself in my sorrows, merely through compassion, related to her the story of my love and my misfortunes. They were, I felt sufficient, to penetrate a heart not wholly callous, and at the moment when I saw her moved I threw myself at her feet, saying: "You see before you that

"unhappy creature who adores your son, and is so "cruelly treated by him. Did love like mine merit "such a return? If I am guilty, does it belong to "my lover, the sole cause of all my errors to punish "me thus rigorously? Judge yourself; if you "think me deserving of pity, oh, inspire him with "the same sentiment!—how humiliating soever it "may be to me, I shall cherish it fondly, if it can "preserve me from his hatred."

"The state of anguish in which she saw me melted the soul of her whom I wished to soften, and the mother of my lover consented to regard me as her daughter; she promised me her cares, and as a pledge of her sincerity, allowed me to take upon myself that precious title; I received it in her arms amid the caresses inseparable from one so dear. The same blood which flows in the veins of my lover had been moved by my sorrows, it made mine pass freely through my heart. Such, gentlemen, is the only hope which attaches me now to life, the success of it can alone render me happy. In waiting the result, I pass my nights in the midst of the fields, my days opposite this house which encloses the object so precious to my tenderness. My soul flies thither at every instant; I see him sometimes through my tears, and although I fear to meet his looks, he is the constant object of mine."

The affecting story of poor Geneviève could not fail to melt the hearts of those benevolent auditors who had been interested first by her silent grief,

and they offered her their services to engage Barrat to do her justice. "I accept your kindness," said she, "but use no violence I intreat; his hand without his heart would be a present but too fatal to "me. Paint to him in lively colours my melancholy situation, one from which he alone can rescue me; tell him, alas! I blush while I repeat "it; tell him that I carry within me a pledge of the "love he once pretended to bear me, a pledge of "my own shame unless he does me justice; exhort "him, if he will not be a lover, at least to be a father, and to pardon the unhappy fruit of his tenderness that it has been too near a heart he has "now learnt to despise."

At these words, yielding to the excess of her grief, tears streamed down her cheeks, and she had scarcely power to thank her benefactors, or follow them with her eyes to the spot whence she expected her fate. Their zeal at the first moment did but serve to increase her sorrows. Barrat, tormented by remorse, supposed them officers of justice sent in pursuit of him by the hapless Geneviève, and concealed himself from them. No sooner were they gone, than he, who had not before deigned to notice her being there, came out to overwhelm her with the most frightful and unmerited reproaches He even carried his barbarity so far, knowing her situation, as to threaten her with being consigned to those abodes of shame destined for the punishment of a licentious passion; nor could the wretched vic-

tim of his cruelty obtain a remission of this sentence but by a promise of flying her generous protectors.

But he flattered himself in vain with the affair being thus buried in oblivion. Nothing could relax the zeal of those who had undertaken to be poor Geneviève's champions; she was only rendered in their eyes more interesting than ever. Not even their efforts, however, could soften the execrable barbarian; caresses only hardened him, menaces rendered him furious; interest alone, that powerful mover of the human soul, seemed for a moment to make some impression upon him. Messieurs de L'Aigle, rejoiced to see the least glimmering of hope, joined to their own purses those of their friends who were all deeply affected with a story of so much woe. They began to flatter themselves that their labours were concluded and rewarded; Geneviève's tears began to be dried; she indulged in the fond idea that the heart of her lover was touched. But Heaven who had formed her with a soul so different from his lover, could not sanction such an unequal union; judging better for her than she would have judged for herself, by a last refusal from the wretched Barrat to do her justice, she was saved from the most deplorable of all evils.

Since that cruel, but at the same time for her, happy moment, she remains in a state of tranquil grief. Lost to hope, time and reflection have lessened the anguish of the first shock, and daily making her lover appear more and more degraded

in her eyes, she may in time taste the repose of which she has long been so cruelly deprived.

January, 1756.

We have just received from the Abbé Prevost the beginning of his translation of the celebrated English novel, the *History of Sir Charles Grandison*, by the author of *Pamela* and *Clarissa*. I reserve my annotations upon this novel, till our translator shall have favoured us with the remainder, which he promises in the course of the present month. Those who are qualified to appreciate the merits of Mr. Richardson, will not be satisfied with the plan followed by the Abbé Prevost in abridging this novel, nor with what he says in the introduction to his translation. He applies to the works of this author the idea of Boccalini, that in every block of wood or stone a fine statue is enclosed, the difficulty only is to extract it. Any one must have a good opinion of his own talents who shall pretend to be the sculptor of the block presented by Mr. Richardson. It is he himself who is indeed a sublime artist, and you, gentlemen translators, who pretend to work upon his *chefs-d'œuvre*, brush away if you can those light spots and that dust which have here and there lighted upon his admirable statues, disengage them, if it be in your power, from the earth which sometimes conceals their contours, but take great care not to let your profane hands touch the statue itself, lest you only betray your own ignorance and insensibility.

Traits of sensibility on the part of princes are always precious; the goodness of their hearts is often a better security for the happiness of the people than the grandest efforts of their genius. You know without doubt that the dauphin, about eight months ago, in playing with a gun, had the misfortune to wound one of his esquires, M. de Chambort, who died in a few days after. He was a man of great merit and universally esteemed; he left a wife whom he tenderly loved, and by whom he was almost adored. The dauphin on this melancholy occasion evinced the most poignant grief and regret, and as some small compensation for the loss of income which was the only part of the loss he could repair, he got the widow a pension of six thousand livres on the regal domains. She was with child at the time of the accident; when she was near the time of her delivery she wrote to the dauphin to recommend the child to his protection in case any thing should happen to herself. The prince's answer was as follows:

Versailles, Jan. 30th, 1756.

"Your interests, Madam, are become mine, "I shall never consider them in any other point of "view. You will always find me ready to comply "with your wishes, and happy, if it should be in "my power to prevent them, both with regard to "yourself and to the child you are about to bring "into the world. I should be sorry that your re-"quests were ever addressed to any other than my-"self; upon whom can you rely with equal confi-

" dence. My only consolation since the dreadful " accident, which I cannot bear to think of, is to " contribute if possible towards the alleviation of " your sorrows, and to soften a grief which believe " me I feel no less keenly than yourself."

Three works from M. de Voltaire have occupied the public for six months past. They have been successively extolled to the skies, decried, condemned, forgotten. I speak of the poem of *La Pucelle*, of that upon *Natural Religion*, and of that upon the *Earthquake at Lisbon*. It is time to revert somewhat to the judgment of the public, and to deliver our own, that the place to be assigned these productions, in the *Temple of Taste*, may be properly ascertained. The poem of *La Pucelle* was known by numbers of people here before it came out, from parts having been so often read in private by M. de Voltaire among parties of his friends; it had thus acquired a great reputation before it was presented to the world in print. It was coldly decided to be, of all M. de Voltaire's works, the most original and that which shewed the most genius.

Announced in this way it was scarcely possible that when it appeared it should not be universally condemned; such is the common lot of all works that are violently puffed beforehand. As they can never be sufficiently perfect to answer the expectations raised in the minds of a heated public by these exaggerated encomiums, they cannot fail to dis-

appoint, and consequently to be condemned when they appear. We are then in the situation of children who have been told too much of a pleasure in store for them, and which ought to have been prepared in secret, and to have come upon them unawares in order to be thoroughly enjoyed. To judge the author of La Pucelle fairly, we must begin by forgetting all that has been said of the work either good or bad; and thus divested of prepossession it will not be difficult to decide fairly upon its real merits.

I am not surprized that devout and austere people are scandalised at it, for they can scarcely be otherwise; but those who do not come under either of these descriptions should be consistent and not blame in M. de Voltaire, what they praise in others. Considering La Pucelle as a piece of wit and humour, as the amusement of the author's idle hours, we ought to pardon the many negligences with which it abounds. Yet as the negligences of M. de Voltaire are commonly of more value than the laboured works of others, we must also acknowledge that at every moment we meet with the most charming details, full of those light and careless graces which assume so peculiar and so enchanting a character from his pen. Some persons have chosen to draw a comparison between this poem and the Lutrin of M. Boileau, but there is this great difference between them, that the latter is a work of labour finished with the greatest care and nicety, while La Pucelle is a rapid sketch:

the one was a serious and laborious occupation to its author, the other never was any thing but the author's idle amusement.

I do not think however that any thing could have made of La Pucelle a poem strictly to be called good; and this is the greater pity, since the subject is admirably adapted to light and airy mirth: but M. de Voltaire has not, if I may so express myself, sufficient poetical phlegm to combine and digest a plan. La Pucelle can scarcely be said to have any plan; the mechanism of it is positively bad, and it might have been charming. *La Henriade*, a national poem, and single in its kind, is, with regard to the machinery, a servile imitation of the Eneid and other epic poems. All that is purely the invention of the poet in La Pucelle, is almost always devoid of genius, and in a bad taste; yet in spite of these defects I have no doubt that this poem will, like all the other productions of M. de Voltaire, become a standard work, and be read alternately with La Fontaine and our other gay and lively authors. The details are charming, and the episodes altogether delightful. The great merit of this poem consists in its presenting every moment to the imagination the most pleasing and varied pictures. Every thing receives its suitable colouring from the recital of the poet, while the movement and the bustle which he knows how to excite when he pleases, and which seem to overturn every thing that had been arranged with great care, prove that the author

amused himself very much in composing it, and cannot fail of equally amusing the reader. A person who knows a great deal relative to the history of La Pucelle, has assured me that it is the production of three women, over whom M. de Voltaire only presided; that one of these, and she who had the greatest talents, was Madame du Châtelet; the other two are still alive. If this be true it perfectly explains the disparities which strike so forcibly in the poem, and the diversity of stile which reigns throughout. It must be acknowledged, however, that M. de Voltaire appears at every moment.

The poem on Natural Religion has been very much admired at Paris. It is impossible not to feel the affecting beauty of the poetry, and the humanity and love of virtue that reign in every line, yet the general opinion is that it had better have been called *Four Epistles to the King of Prussia*, than published as a poem. There is not in fact any general plan in the work which unites the four parts together in one connected point of view, and this we have a right to expect under the title of a poem; whereas beauty of versification alone would have sufficed to make four admirable epistles or essays in verse. In comparing the poem upon *Natural Religion* with the *Essay on Man* which it necessarily recalls to the mind, we shall find that there is as great a distance between M. de Voltaire and the English poet, as between the careless negligent muse of Chaulieu and the masculine regular beauty of Racine or Despréaux. Pope in his *Essay*

on Man, unites the finest poetry with the closest reasoning, and the most profound metaphysics. M. de Voltaire, in his poem, does not pride himself on very deep reasoning or metaphysical rigour; but his poetry is so fine, his language so affecting, that, if he does not always satisfy the mind, he can never fail to touch the heart.

The philosophy of the poem on the *Lisbon Earthquake* is not better than that of the poem on *Natural Religion*, and the poetry is less fine. The author, however, follows his reasoning with some precision, and you will find many charming verses. In one word, whoever says of the three poems that all is good is in the wrong, and he who says that all is bad is not in the right.

April, 1756.

Letter of an unknown Lady to M. Diderot.

You will be surprized, sir, that a woman who has not the happiness of knowing you, who makes no pretensions to being a literary character, or to any knowledge of science, should send you an article for your Encyclopedia. But every body must admire this work; and a woman, without being able to read, may understand better how to treat the article *fontange* than even the most skilful physicians.* I know very well how extensive is

* The French word *fontange* is here retained, though it might be translated *topknot* or *pompoon*, because the name it bears is that of the inventor, and it has therefore been judged better to retain it. The article upon it in the French Encyclopœdia was undertaken by a physician.—*Translator.*

the knowledge of the person that has undertaken this article, but I can assure you that he has never examined a *fontange* with that nicety necessary to compile an accurate description of it; nor do I believe that either Aristotle, Hippocrates, or Galen could give him any light on this important subject. If my *fontange* be so fortunate as to please you, I may perhaps be able to furnish you with more articles of a similar kind; if you find it ill tied up, you are perfectly at liberty to untie it, and tie it up again after your own fashion. If you prefer that of the doctor, I shall believe that people may write very well upon subjects they know nothing about, and will send you an article on medicine which may be well worthy of insertion.

I have the honour to be, sir,
your most obedient humble servant.

The Article.

Fontange. A knot of ribbands which serves as an ornament for the head-dress of women. It bears the name of the person who invented it, as the *Palatine*, an ornament for the neck, bears that of the Princess who introduced the fashion in France.

The desire of pleasing is perhaps still more inventive than the love of glory or truth. Nothing in the world has ever assumed more varied forms than the dress of women. Occupied entirely with increasing their charms, or concealing their defects, dress is the chief object of their study. But

good models are at all times scarce. Women have occasion for all the resources of their minds to carry to perfection those trifles which are of so much importance to them. Chance has often led to very important discoveries, but minute improvements are always the effect of close application. Perhaps the discovery of *attraction* cost Newton less thought than was bestowed by Madame de *Fontange* on the ornament which bears her name; if *Love* himself had not tied it, scarcely would it have been retained to this day. It is generally remarked that prudes, true genuine prudes, are always ill dressed. The art of dress has indeed an infinity of details, and perhaps love alone can inspire the niceties of them in true perfection. It is not sufficient to tie up a *fontange* and stick it on the head, it must be tied with grace, and disposed with an air; its form must be suited to each particular countenance, its colour suited to the complexion, it must correspond with the *Palatine* and the *sleeve-bows;* it must, in short, like every thing else, be made to assimilate well with all the other parts of the dress. If the unfortunate Blake, so ridiculed in the Memoirs of the Count de Grammont, had known that *lemon-coloured* ribbands, with little pig's eyes, light eye-lashes, red hair, and a pale complexion, were entirely at variance with all the rules of taste, she would have substituted *blue* instead; she would not then indeed have been less ugly, but she would have been less ridiculous.

The *fontange*, properly so called, is no longer

worn as an ornament of full dress, it is superseded by flowers and diamonds; but some secret instinct has still preserved it as an ornament for undress, and every lady has one on her night-cap. Is some mysterious virtue attached to this article of apparel, or does superstition introduce itself into every species of worship?

(This article is inserted in the sixth volume of the Encyclopædia.)

The hill of Montmartre, at Paris, is called the *City of Asses*, on account of the great number of windmills upon it. Some obscure and wretched author, I know not whom, has published *The Philosophical Thoughts of a Citizen of Montmartre*; and it must be acknowledged that he has only done his work justice in ranging himself among the fraternity of that quarter. He has been pleased to indulge in a tone of satire against the *Unbelievers*, as he calls them, which at every moment betrays the tip of the ear; and which, if we had not been told so, we could easily have guessed to be of the product of Montmartre. The objects against whom the satire of this formidable athlete with long ears is more particularly aimed, are Messieurs de Buffon, de Maupertuis, d'Alembert, de Condillac, Rousseau, and Diderot; the latter above all.

May, 1756.

The *Memoirs of M. de La-Porte*, first valet-de-chambre to Louis the Fourteenth, which have been published within the last fortnight, are read

with the utmost eagerness by our Parisians. Although they are very ill written, there is a something in them so natural, and such an air of truth, that they could not fail of success. M. de La-Porte was a sort of confident to the Queen; Anne of Austria, wife to Louis the Thirteenth; though this Princess afterwards, forgetting the services he had rendered her, sacrificed him to the jealousy of Cardinal Mazarine. Except the manual attempt of the Cardinal upon the person of the young King, which is mentioned at the end of these Memoirs, we find few particulars not previously known, but many already known of that time are fully confirmed. The pernicious and infamous design of Cardinal Mazarine to give the King a very bad education, that he might preserve the more securely that ascendancy which, through the weakness of the Queen, he had acquired in the Court and in the kingdom, is established very clearly. Cardinal Richelieu, also, does not appear under the most favourable colours. When we see these great statesmen, who are so eulogized, and so strongly recommended as examples to posterity in our academical speeches—when, I say, we see Cardinal Richelieu always involved in a thousand petty court intrigues and quarrels, and M. Colbert occupied in planning the destruction of his rival M. Fouquet by the blackest and most odious means, we are exceedingly disposed to change the admiration with which we have been taught to contemplate their memories into contempt.

If it be true, that the nearer a writer is to nature the more certain he is of pleasing, it must be allowed that the English, in their dramatic pieces, have greatly the advantage over us. There reigns in them an inestimable tone of nature which the timidity of our taste has banished from French pieces. M. Patu has just published, in 2 volumes, 12mo. *A Selection of smaller Dramatic Pieces, translated from the English,* which will eminently support what I have advanced. The principal one among this selection is the celebrated *Beggar's Opera* of Gay, which has had such an amazing run in England. We are here in the very worst company imaginable; the *Dramatis Personæ* are robbers, pickpockets, gaolers, prostitutes, and the like; yet we are highly amused, and in no haste to quit them;—and why?—because there is nothing in the world more original and more natural. There is no occasion to compare our most celebrated comic operas with this, to see how far we are removed from truth and nature; and this is the reason that, notwithstanding our wit, we are almost always flat and insipid. Two faults are generally committed by our writers, which they seem incapable of avoiding; they think they have done wonders if they have only copied faithfully the dictionaries of the personages they bring upon the stage, forgetting that the great art is to choose the moments of character and passion in those who are to speak, since 'tis those moments alone that render them interesting. For want of this discrimina-

tion the piece necessarily sinks into insipidity and monotony. Why do almost all M. Vadé's pieces fatigue the audience to death?—it is because all his characters speak the same language, because each is a perfect resemblance of the other. Instead of this, in the *Beggar's Opera*, among eight or ten girls of the town, each has her separate and distinct character, her peculiar traits, her peculiar modes of expression, which give her a marked distinction from her companions.

June, 1756.

The ideas of mankind respecting the talents necessary for a negociator are in general very vague.—In what do these talents consist?—I once knew a man whose genius in war was not disputed by any body, who had a strong and penetrating mind, ideas just and well-digested, who spoke with great facility, whose manners were at once dignified and pleasing. One day I observed to him, that since, according to all appearance, peace was likely to continue for a long time, I was surprised he had never thought of turning his attention to negociation, and endeavoured to get an appointment as ambassador to some court. "I do not," said he, "feel myself at all equal to such an em-"ployment. I am completely unacquainted with "the art of persuading people into things which "are contrary to their interests." This man, who to an excellent understanding united the utmost truth and candour, thought that these latter quali-

ties were adverse to the pursuit suggested to him. I am not, however, of the same opinion. The arts of sophism, the windings of a subtle and intriguing spirit, scatter, wherever they appear, the seeds of suspicion and distrust, and mutual confidence is the very essence of all negociations. Nothing shows such a want of address as the assuming a great air of address and acuteness; the narrowest minds will be inspired with distrust; and, as your pretensions seem to imply a conviction of your own superiority over them, their *amour-propre* is immediately revolted. They then, in their turn, by evincing great distrust, think they show great penetration; and, fearing to be made dupes, become inaccessible to the most simple and unequivocal reasonings. A frank and open-hearted character will, by his reputation for uprightness and honesty, do more business in one day than the man of cunning and address would execute in a year. The true genius for business consists in an enlarged mind, capable of seeing things in all their bearings, but easy of access, and fertile in resources—in a mind which can seize at once all the advantages and disadvantages of any measure, and knows how to present it to others on the side that appears the most advantageous for them. His success, in order to be solid, should be grounded on truth and good faith. If the Italians have a great reputation in this way as in many others, it has not been acquired by means of petty artifices, and that deceitful suppleness of which they are accused; it is that

this lively nation, whose happy genius can adapt itself to every thing, feels more acutely than any of its neighbours. The most simple impressions being stronger among them than among any other people in Europe, they seize every thing quickly, express forcibly what they feel forcibly, and draw others after them by the fire and promptitude of their genius. Sentiment acts with a thousand times the force and certainty that understanding does; it gives rapidity to the ideas, light to the mind, is the parent of eloquence, and of the gift of persuading. These are the true and only means to succeed in diplomacy. If those minds that are always breaking into scintillations, are subject to a perpetual change of battery, and will destroy on the morrow what they built up with so much care on the eve, it is not so much from pursuing a system founded on deceit, as because a stronger impression having succeeded to that of the eve, the recollection of the former is entirely effaced. But these very minds, if tempered only by a few grains of good-sense and judgment, become geniuses of the first order.

A work has just been published, in 3 vols. 12mo. under the title of *Memoirs of the Marquis de Torcy, illustrating the History of the Negociations from the Treaty of Ryswick to the Peace of Utrecht.* These Memoirs, known to many persons before they were printed, were impatiently expected, and have been received with great applause. The Duchess de Saint Pierre, sister to M. de Torcy, having

given a manuscript copy to the Pope, Cardinal Passionnei gave it to a Frenchman, who has had it printed at Paris. M. de Torcy was Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs during the unfortunate war, on account of the succession to the crown of Spain. He was himself in Holland to solicit peace of the conquerors. After having finished these Memoirs in his retreat, he revised and put the last hand to them, under the inspection of the Cardinal de Polignac and Lord Bolingbroke, both men celebrated for their talents, and both having been employed in the same negociation. The work is written with great simplicity, yet with sufficient dignity; it is diffuse, but that is scarcely a fault in such kind of Memoirs. The difficulty that the author is under to compress and at the same time give a connected idea of transactions so complicated, conveys a faithful image of the painful and tortuous march to be gone through in a negociation so full of thorns and stumbling-blocks. We seem, as it were, to be thinking with the different ministers employed on this occasion; and the author, detaining his readers amidst the narrow circle in which he was himself detained by the enemies of France, engages us by this means in his interests, and obliges us to to take part with him. I think the work will be very useful for persons designed for public business; they will find a model for negociation in the most important pacification that has taken place in Europe since the treaty of Westphalia. It seems scarcely credible that the

Dutch could have required of the king the free return of the French refugees into their country. Such however was the case. What folly! It was the interest of the enemies of France to stipulate for free permission being granted to the Protestants to quit the country.

It is quite the fashion to speak ill of women; men seem as if they sought by calumny and detraction to avenge themselves for the empire exercised over them by the irresistible charms of beauty. In the time of Louis the Fourteenth, our *beaux-esprits* were always scattering around their epigrams and sarcasms against the lovely sex; at present when all is philosophy, when even men of the world have taken the infection, or at least assume the mask of it, we slander women more methodically, and with a pedantry extremely ridiculous in the eyes of true philosophy. But if persons of an ordinary class may be permitted to indulge in false logic, and to decide by poor and paltry modes of reasoning upon matters which belong to sentiment alone, this can never be pardoned in those whose writings are intended to spread light and knowledge, and to do honour to truth in every way.

According to the principles of M. de Buffon, the corporeal part of the attachment between the sexes is the only one acknowledged by nature. All other commerce between man and woman, the preference felt for one object over every other, the attachment to the chosen object pursued with such undaunted perseverance in despite of all obstacles, those de-

lights of sentiment so highly vaunted by persons of wild and ardent imaginations, that tender philosophy so enchanting to souls deeply inspired—all these he considers as affording but a chimerical and factitious happiness, whence really result nothing but disorder and calamity. Rousseau's opinion upon this important subject is that woman being by her nature more feeble than man, is for that very reason inferior to him, consequently ought to obey and yield all her rights to him. On the same principle he thinks that the mother should not have the same authority over the children as the father, because the weakness of her constitution and her frequent infirmities preclude her aspiring to that vigorous health enjoyed by man. What reasoning! as if our rights in nature were only in proportion to our strength, or as if, (recurring to the ideas of M. de Buffon) it were very strange that beings endowed with an imagination, the effects of which they can neither prevent or destroy, should place their happiness on ideal things. This manner of philosophizing can only suit idiots, inferior even to the brute creation, equally devoid of sentiment and of reflection, confined entirely to the laws of a stupid sensation. M. Rousseau's philosophy may be very well for lions and tigers, whose rights are in proportion to their strength, but it is contrary to reason and particularly unworthy of the champion for the equality of all conditions.

Let us then lay down two incontestable principles; the one that woman both in the physical

and moral order of things is what she ought to be, and that she has all the advantages and disadvantages which must necessarily belong to a being so constituted; the other that the effects of love and beauty are not the less real for having their origin in the imagination, and will constitute the happiness and misery of man as long as his senses are subordinate to his imagination. All that can be said further against women is equally destitute of reason and philosophy; all the defects with which they are reproached are the work of man, of society, and of an ill-regulated education. Ought we in fact to be astonished when we see them artificial, hypocritical, full of trick, when all our cares tend to inspire them with, and cherish in them, those sentiments which the unjust laws of a chimerical decorum condemn them to conceal. Incessantly harrassed between sentiments which are authorised by nature, and the customs which an arbitrary state of society have erected into a duty, how are they to extricate themselves from a labyrinth where every thing real and natural is sacrificed to what is imaginary and factitious.

It may be said with truth that the education of men is bad enough, and in its principles contrary in most respects to reason and good sense. 'But how much more deplorable is that of women. If our early youth be lost in futile studies at college, which it is only desirable to forget as soon as possible; we are at least on our entrance into the world, instructed in the true sentiments of honour; the studies of our

state are no longer concealed from us, examples as well as maxims combine to regulate our conduct to teach us to merit public esteem, and to give us, if not virtues, something at least that shall be equivalent to them, if any thing can be equivalent to a sense of honour and good breeding. The fate of women is very different. Exiled like us from the paternal roof, almost from their birth, they are placed in convents where the least objection that can be made to the education they receive is, that no just ideas are inspired into the young mind, either with respect to the duties belonging to their stations when they are to come out into the world, nor of the principles of real virtue and honour, of decorum of conduct, and good morals; they are never informed as to what they are to find in society in any of the situations where the chances of life may place them, and in which they ought to be instructed, if they are expected to avoid the dangers attendant upon them. The code of morals which custom has established for women, far from being founded on the immutable laws of truth and nature, rests on a set of arbitrary, ill-defined principles; the honour they are taught is any thing rather than true honour; the modesty enjoined them is a false kind of modesty; all their merits, all the decorums of their situation are made to consist in dissimulation, in the suppression of natural sentiments which a chimerical duty prescribes them to subdue, but which no power on earth can annihilate,

Impressed with these principles, false prin-

ciples as they must be deemed by every reasonable mind, they only quit the convent to be consigned to the arms of a person unknown to them, to whom they are bound by ties eternal and indissoluble. The sweet and sacred duties of hymen become thus by the tyranny of our customs so many outrages against modesty; the veil which the decency and delicacy of a tender and respectful love would have gradually and imperceptibly drawn aside, is rudely snatched away. Thrown thus into a world, the dangers of which have never been represented to her, what can a woman do, abandoned to herself or delivered up to a man who exacts as a duty what should be granted only as a favour to the lover that has found the means to touch the heart. Ah! if amidst the tumult of desires that may afterwards arise and the instability of principles, she fall into error, let any one who can reason candidly and equitably, pronounce whether she is not more to be pitied than condemned. How is she to discriminate between the essential unalterable laws of virtue and honour, and those imaginary ideas of duty which have been instilled into her mind. Soon perceiving, but too evidently, the futility of the latter, will she not be in imminent danger of extending the contempt she finds it impossible not to feel for them, to what belongs to the indispensable laws of real virtue. The more she has been kept under restraint, the more she will feel her passions urge her to overleap all bounds, and confounding real duty with arbitrary practices, she will be irre-

coverably lost before she has even been afforded the means of reflection. Alas! when we reflect candidly upon the dangers inseparable from such a situation, far from being severe upon the errors of womankind, one is tempted to consider any one who escapes with innocence from so severe a trial as a miracle of virtue.

And that many such miracles do exist, in spite of the obstacles by which they are surrounded, in spite of our calumnies and philosophical pride, cannot be denied. Since then it is only by a miracle or something approaching to it that they can be preserved from falling amid the surrounding temptations, what claim have not such women to the public esteem, is it too much to say that they ought to be almost the objects of our adoration. Two circumstances alone interpose to prevent the ruin of women while so many conspire to promote it. Occupied almost entirely with soft and tender passions, their hearts are alike strangers to the shocks of ambition and interest, the two primary sources of the calamities of mankind, and to those obscure and odious vices which so often sully the minds of men. Sentiment is in women a more quick and lively, as well as a more delicate feeling than in men, and it is this principally which preserves them, and prevents their falling into still greater misfortunes than are their ordinary lot. The quivering glimmering light of sentiment is a thousand times more sure, more to be depended on than the brilliant flame of understanding and reason. 'Tis for

this reason that men commonly plunge headlong into enormous frailties, and fall with a dreadful crash, while many a woman recedes even upon the very brink of the precipice.

August, 1756.

M. de la Beaumelle has published in Holland an edition of Madame de Maintenon's Letters in nine volumes 12mo. with six volumes of Memoirs of that celebrated woman. It has been upon this occasion very justly observed, that we are now at the precise moment when the life and letters of Madame de Maintenon will be read with interest; if they had been delayed many years longer no one would have concerned himself about them. At the Court of Henry the Fourth, says M. de Voltaire, people were still amused with anecdotes of the reign of Charles the Ninth, but any one who should now take it into his head to publish the tattle of those times, unless it was worked up into an interesting novel, would be sure of not being read. Anecdotes of the reign of Louis the Fourteenth are still entertaining to us, because that is a period so recent that it seems fresh in our memories; there even still remain among us some few of the actors in, and witnesses of, those events. In twenty or thirty years from hence will come the turn of the Regency, and the little minutiæ of the Court of Louis the Fourteenth, will be no more interesting to us than are now those of his predecessor. A great lesson this for Princes, and one with which

they do not seem sufficiently impressed; they ought to pay the price of their distinction by great virtues, by superior qualities of every kind, remembering always that their rank precludes mediocrity; vices which would be trifles and almost overlooked in private situations, in them become great and glaring. If they are wicked, their memory will be held in execration by posterity, a moment only is theirs, and they cannot save themselves from contempt but by being great in all their actions. As long as there are men spread over the surface of the earth, two things alone can preserve the memory of those that are gone from oblivion, genius and virtue. To excite admiration great actions must be performed, to attract love and respect good ones; these are the only securities for immortality. All else that has been invented by sordid interest and base flattery to blind the eyes of Princes with regard to their own actions, will soon disappear before the light of truth,—that all-pervading light which effaces each borrowed lustre, and gives to every object its proper colour and hue.

To range the history of Madame de Maintenon in the class of a book of anecdotes, is to pronounce judgment upon that celebrated woman herself; it is as much as to say that, how extraordinary soever may be the part she performed on the great theatre of the world, her memory does not merit being preserved among mankind; and this is to pronounce the truth. Let her history, which has just been published by the worst of writers, be written by

the best, by M. de Voltaire himself, he would write an agreeable work because every thing that comes from his pen must be so, but never could he, without wounding truth at every moment, succeed in making his heroine interesting. A man of great talents will therefore avoid such a subject. Let the first mistress of Louis the Fourteenth, on the contrary, the tender the affectionate Duchess de La Vallière, be celebrated by a historian with only moderate talents, and posterity will shew as deep an interest in her memory, as they shew indifference towards that of Madame de Maintenon. Louis the Fourteenth himself, who of all the Kings that ever reigned, had the greatest degree of homage paid him, who was the most flattered and worshipped, if he could have foreseen what we now think of him would not have died without knowing himself better. The æra of his reign is undoubtedly an extraordinary one; but what merit is it to be the cotemporary of such men as a Turenne, a Colbert, a Corneille, a Molière, a La Fontaine if we do not share their glory by superior qualities, or at least by solid ones, in ourselves. Posterity can never consider Louis the Fourteenth as a man of talents; he was fond of great things, but a pedant; essentially an honest man, but spoiled and rendered unjust through incense and adulation; ingulphed in a mass of prejudices each more absurd than the other, believing that he could create at his will men of genius in all classes, yet never able to throw off the empire of women and of priests. Politicians,

who always find the causes of events in the character of Princes, forget that every man is born with a certain foundation, whether it be good or bad; and for the rest we may fairly assert, in defiance of their opinion, that their characters rise out of events, and not that events depend upon their characters.

The President Hénault says of Louis the Thirteenth, that he was born at the precise moment proper for such a character; for an earlier period he would have been too feeble, for a later too circumspect; son and father to the greatest among our kings he established the still tottering throne of Henry the Fourth, and prepared the wonders of the reign of Louis the Fourteenth. It must be allowed that the love of antitheses often leads to notable discoveries. Happily for us if the man known in history by the appellation of Louis the Thirteenth had lived sooner or later, the author of the *Chronological Abridgement* would have found some other antithesis to prove that it was still better he should have come at that time. But he does not consider that a man born with the same fundamental character if he had come in other times, and under other circumstances, would have received different modifications, and imbibed different opinions, would have been, in one word, another man. Louis the Thirteenth no more prepared the wonders of the reign of Louis the Fourteenth than the President Hénault or myself. Louis the Fourteenth with Colbert and Louvois as his

ministers, and Turenne as his general, was a very different man from Louis the Fourteenth with Villars as his general, and Chamillard as his minister. He was however the same individual being, and flattered himself that he could make as great men of Villars and Chamillard as their predecessors had been.

In reading the Memoirs of Madame de Maintenon it will be impossible not to make some such reflections as the following. It is very consoling to human nature to see a king so occupied with Jansenism, with Quietism, with Mandamuses, with Pastoral Instructions, with the *Constitution Unigenitus*, that he has no time to think of soothing the miseries and promoting the happiness of his subjects; posterity will sympathize exceedingly with the many nights rest of which his Majesty was deprived by the quarrels of the Bishops. As to Madame de Maintenon, who without being Queen had the honour of being his wife, though her enemies accuse her of having been false, intriguing, hypocritical, the friends of truth will say that her devotion, though it might be overstrained, was sincere not feigned; that she was what passes in the world for a woman of talents, but that her mind was narrow, quite of a common cast, without any sort of dignity or elevation, and her talents were confined to petty objects, to conducting little intrigues. For the rest, without merit, and without vices, she would have done very well for the Abbess of a Convent of Nuns, but was ridiculously misplaced in the situation to which she had the

address to raise herself. If her conduct be examined according to the principles of honour, and of an upright and generous heart, it cannot be pronounced free from reproach. We see her engaged in the most holy cabals for the destruction of Madame de Montespan who was her benefactress, the person to whom she owed the situation which enabled her to plot her ruin. It is true that *gratitude* to Madame de Montespan engaged her to act thus; an ardent desire to promote both her salvation and that of the King impelled Madame de Maintenon to engage in all possible intrigues in order to dissolve so scandalous a connection. Persons of principle will perhaps be disposed to think that she could not with any decency remain at Court after the disgrace of a woman to whom she owed every thing; thus at least honour and probity would most likely reason, but devotion has other ways of managing such matters. Though it would have worn a better appearance to the world had Madame de Maintenon followed her benefactress to take care of her soul, yet she preferred the King's salvation to that of his quondam mistress, and indeed where the salvation of a King is in question, any one may fairly abandon a friend to despair without fearing to be reproached with treason and baseness. It must be acknowledged that true devotees are a singularly happy set of people; the most equivocal actions become admirable with them for the sake of the motives, and what other men, even among the least delicate on the score of virtue and pro-

bity, would consider as atrocious, they can perform with a holy confidence, for the love of God and their neighbour. All Madame de Maintenon's modes of thinking and acting are tinctured with this kind of elevation of sentiment. M. de Fenelon and the Cardinal de Noailles were her friends, but the moment they were suspected of leaning to the new faith, that is to say when the Jesuits had found means to blacken their characters in the King's eyes, she abandons them religiously, making a sacrifice of them to holy Mother Church, and the stability of her doctrines. If this morality be not fine, it is at least very convenient. It is amusing, for the rest, to hear our heroine cry out that France is ruined because a Convent of Nuns is in want of subsistence, and runs the risk of being dispersed, at a time when the whole kingdom was afflicted with a terrible famine.

I cannot conclude this article without devoting a few words to M. de La Beaumelle. His friends say that the Memoirs are the production of a man of talents without taste, and without judgment. Persons of taste on the contrary consider the book as a miserable rhapsody, which we notwithstanding, read with pleasure, because we feel our curiosity awakened by the personages of whom it treats. Honest men are alike scandalised at the licentiousness abounding in it, and at the meanness of the style, which denotes less a want of talents than a low and corrupt mind. Equally do they reprobate the perpetual contradictions to be found, since they

proceed less frequently from extravagance of the brain, from a want of clearness and arrangement in the ideas, than from the base adulation of the author at one time, towards the very same persons that at others he condemns with incredible insolence.

September, 1756.

M. Pigale, one of our first sculptors, has just exhibited at the Louvre the model of a monument which the King has ordered to be erected to Marshal Saxe, in the Lutheran Church of St. Thomas at Strasbourg. The idea of this monument is at once noble, simple and affecting. The hero is represented standing; above and behind him is a pillar ornamented with various trophies. In front, is a tomb which death opens; he shews the hero the fatal hour, and points to him to descend into it. France, seated on one of the steps which leads to it, appears in the utmost despair and endeavours with her right hand to retain the Marshal, while with her left she repulses death; this latter figure the artist has clothed in a sort of winding-sheet, to avoid the hideous appearance of a mere skeleton. To the right of the Marshal are the symbols of the nations he conquered, an eagle thrown upon its back with its wings displayed, a lion terrified, a leopard overthrown, &c. &c. On the same side below, near the tomb, stands Hercules with his elbow rested on his club, and his head reclined on his hand, he appears in deep affliction,

at the event which forms the subject of the monument. Every body admires the beauty and sublimity of this figure, alike for the noble and antique taste in which it is executed, and for the strong expression given to it. The figure of France is scarcely less admired, and indeed it is particularly fine. A Genius which is in the back ground and which has the air of a Cupid in tears, dropping his torch, is universally reprobated, and it is hoped will be banished. Such an idea, too poor for the subject, weakens the effect of the whole. Some people wish that the head of Death should be partly enveloped in the drapery which conceals the rest of the skeleton, and this would perhaps be in a better taste. It is also hoped that the figure of the Marshal will be made to resemble him more; this is indeed essential, and very easy to be done, since we have busts of him which are very strong likenesses. The whole of this figure seems the part most open to criticism, he should not look up in the air as he does, but contemplate Death with a firm and intrepid eye. This expression would perhaps be difficult, but nothing is impossible to a man of genius; it is besides absolutely necessary; we never look in the air when we are about to descend. This admirable monument is to be executed in marble. It will do equal honour to the great man whom it commemorates, and to the king by whom it is erected; and will with reason be regarded as one of the finest productions of the eighteenth century.

November, 1756.

Messieurs de Buffon and Daubenton have just given us the sixth volume of their *Natural History*. It contains the description of the cat, and of wild animals in general, among others the stag, the doe, the hare, and the rabbit. M. Daubenton's part of this work, the Anatomical history, is little regarded at Paris; as it is a matter of research rather useful than brilliant, it cannot interest those who merely seek amusement and care nothing at all about instruction. We are occupied only with the parts written by M. de Buffon, the subjects of which are more to our taste, and which are treated by him with a pomp, a harmony, and a magnificence of stile, that almost turns our heads. Indeed the excessive value set upon stile by the Parisians is most curious and singular; scarcely can any work fail of success among them if it have this recommendation. Far be from me the least wish to depreciate the merits of such a writer as M. de Buffon; I am on the contrary, persuaded that it is to him, to M. de Voltaire, and to M. Diderot that we owe the obligation of having preserved the strength, energy, truth, and real beauty of stile belonging to the French language, in opposition to all the attempts to corrupt it made by the servile copyists of M. de Fontenelle, who are no less superficial as philosophers, than deficient in taste as writers.

But the merit of M. de Buffon will lose much of its lustre, I think, with posterity and among foreigners. To relish entirely the beauty of such

language, a certain delicacy of organs is required, which is to be found only among a small number of persons of taste residing in the capital, it is almost lost to provincials and persons of other countries. The merit of M. Daubenton will, on the contrary, be felt more strongly by them; it is durable and solid, and the idlers of Paris are the class that of all others have the least relish for things of this description. Let us then confine our strictures to M. de Buffon's part of the work, and in order to judge it with due critical severity let us be constantly on our guard against the seductive majesty and poetry of his stile. If he misapplies this dangerous instrument and turns it against the interests of truth he will be more guilty than another, in proportion as his talents are superior to another's. It is then a heavy reproach I have to make him upon the pompous eulogium of hunting, prefixed to his description of the stag. I will not suspect him of seeking to pay his court to the great, by flattering their predominant taste at the expense of truth and her sacred rights; this would be an unpardonable meanness. Courtiers may indulge themselves in the despicable habit of complimenting every thing they see done by those on whom their useless existence depends, but the philosopher owes nothing to princes except silence or truth. Without suspecting M. de Buffon capable of betraying truth, I must observe that nothing can be more unphilosophical that what he says upon hunting. If his name were not entitled to

some respect I should be tempted to say that it is a rhetorical declamation of high-sounding words and phrases, destitute of ideas, and still more destitute, if possible, of that good sense which ought to be the inseparable companion of true philosophy. We need only compare this effusion with what is said upon the same subject in the Encyclopedia, and which is from the pen of M. Diderot, to see how different the language of true philosophy is from that of our naturalist.

In effect, without wishing to support truth by the futile resource of declamation, which only dishonours it, there is no pleasure less worthy of a thinking being than hunting. The warfare that is carried on against the brute creation for the nourishment of man, or even for the pleasures of the table, may be in some sort excused, but man must be very degraded, must be a depraved animal in every sense of the word, to reduce into principle the art of driving the stag before him, of making a creature, the innocent and tranquil inhabitant of the forests, who never arrays himself against any living being, who only employs the strength, the fleetness, the cunning, all the talents he has received from nature to avoid the cruelty and persecutions of an enemy he has never offended—that must be a depraved mind, I say, which can delight in pursuing such an animal and keeping him in agonies for hours to make him at last expire in torments. This sort of hunting then, in the eyes of the Sage, can only be considered as the shameful and guilty

occupation of a madman, a hundred times more of a brute than the brute he pursues, and who, despising the laws of nature, is incessantly interrupting its beauty and harmony. I know that the greater part of those who make it their daily amusement are not guilty to so great an extent, they only indulge in an exercise which they consider as harmless, they are far from intending to be guilty of a crime; but they ought to reflect upon the nature of this amusement and but a little reflection would surely suffice to convince them that nothing can be more barbarous, more in opposition to the generosity on which they pride themselves, than to seek their recreation in the protracted torments of a sentient being; a creature against which they cannot plead in excuse that it ever does injury to any other being. If habit, education, and the power of custom prevent these reflections occurring to the mass of mankind, those at least who do reflect, who pass their lives in the search of truth, should never in like manner neglect and betray its august and sacred rights. I am not at all of the opinion of M. Rousseau, who in one of his fits of spleen says that it is as well to let princes hunt, for fear, if prevented, they should do worse things.

Another reproach which may be urged against M. de Buffon, and which his enemies have not failed to repeat with a due portion of acrimony, is his devotion to his systems. I was in hopes that he had corrected this defect, at least his *Dissertation on the nature of animals*

prefixed to his fourth volume appeared to me perfectly free from it. But it seems a part of his nature, and, as such, has here completely resumed its ascendancy; systems intrude at every moment, where it is possible to bring them in, with a confidence which can justly be allowed only to established truths. This intoxication of systematising spirits is a very singular thing; they build up in their heads a scaffolding which is very artificially arranged, and constructed very scientifically, but has unhappily no foundation to rest upon. At the first view they are delighted with the boldness of their ideas, they are seduced by the novelty of them, they soon impose upon themselves, and forgetting that their edifice wants foundation and solidity, they grant it all the prerogatives of truth, and hate those, who, perhaps without any intention, overthrow their paper edifice with a single breath of true philosophy. They can see at length nothing but their systems, they are only occupied in glossing over the defects of them, of which none are more conscious than themselves, with over-looking, nay, even corrupting in their favour, the truths that cross their way.

M. de Buffon has always astonished me with the thorough conviction he seems to feel of the certainty of his theory respecting the earth. If it were among that small number of manifest truths, on which it is impossible there should be two opinions, he could not speak with greater confidence upon the subject. The citizen of Geneva is

pretty much in the same case. Since, according to his system, the state of savages is that which is the most conformable to nature, there is no virtue, no happiness which he does not find in it; more especially he considers it as wholly exempted from crimes. In vain does true and impartial history represent how much the savage is addicted to vengeance, how much he is by nature suspicious, and how inextinguishable and cruel are his hatreds, he opposes to facts so well known a bold assertion that the savage is a stranger to resentment, and that the moment the offence is past, he forgets it entirely. But the most extraordinary thing of all in these systematisers is, that they easily perceive how others are absorbed in their chimeras, and never suspect that they are themselves in the same case. I have sometimes thought that this prepossession was necessary to give their ideas the warmth and strength we see. In effect if they could foresee how the edifice which they have raised with so much toil and pains is to moulder away, they could not feel the pride in it which we daily witness. If true philosophy were once to be established among mankind, there would, according to all appearance, be no writers, and perhaps this would not be a great misfortune; we should then not see people hating and persecuting each other for difference of opinion, and if so, the cessasion of writing, far from being an evil, would be the most valuable of blessings.

January, 1757.

Bernard le Bouvier de Fontenelle, Dean of the French Academy, and of the Academies of Sciences and Inscriptions, died on Sunday the Ninth of Jannary, in the evening. He had very nearly completed a hundred years, as he was born on the Eleventh of February, 1657.—M. de Fontenelle is one of those extraordinary men who, witness for a century of all the revolutions of the human mind, has contributed himself towards accomplishing some, and has prepared the way to many others. Born without genius, he owes all his success to the clearness, the correctness, and the precision of his mind, to a style ingenious, flowery, and in a certain way brilliant; a style of which he was the creator, and of which there has been since, such a number of bad copyists. While we are waiting for the time when the successor of this celebrated man at the Academy, shall, in his eulogium, give us an idea of his merits and his literary labours, I will endeavour to present you with some sketches, hazarding at the same time some reflections by the way, that will give you an idea of his character.

Academical speeches commonly contain nothing but vapid and fulsome praises, heaped together without discernment or taste; truth requires that the subject should be treated very differently. The life of M. de Fontenelle, considering the various objects with which it is connected, would afford fine scope for the pen of a philosoper; it

would involve the history of philosophy, and the revolutions it has experienced in France from the time of Descartes to the present moment.—What a grand subject!—M. de Fontenelle was one of the most celebrated disciples of that destroyer of the scholastic philosophy. At present that the Newtonian system has triumphed in France, as in all the rest of enlightened Europe, over every other philosophical profession of faith, the only adherents remaining to Descartes, are M. de Mairan, who has given us a *Treatise upon the Aurora-Borealis*, and another upon the *Nature of Ice*, with a few more of the oldest Academicians, not men of any note. A time will very likely come when the disciples of Newton will be no more in vogue than are now those of Descartes. Every thing is revolutionary in the human mind, as well as in the physical and moral order of the Universe; schools destroy one another, the names of great men alone remain, like the immense pyramids of Egypt, in spite of the effort of ages, and the ravages of time. The whole croud of subaltern philosophers, disciples of the opinions of others, will disappear, will be effaced from the remembrance of mankind, the names alone of such men as Newton, Leibnitz, Descartes, Bacon, and some others, will, combined with those of Aristotle and Plato be remembered and held in veneration, as long as philosophy and letters shall endure.

What will save M. de Fontenelle from the oblivion into which the apostles of a fleeting reli-

gion cannot fail of sinking, is the real merit of having been the first to render philosophy popular in France. His *Plurality of Worlds*, his *History of the Oracles*, and several other works of his are become classical books. Men of the world, till his time so empty, and so ignorant, even women, whose tastes and occupations have so great an influence in all that concerns the manners of polished life in France, have drawn from his works the principles of a sound and enlightened philosophy. His very style, which a severe taste cannot but condemn, has, by a something catching in it to the generality of readers, contributed to extend the influence of this light, to increase the love of truth, and enlarge the boundaries of the empire of reason. It is true that in enlightening us thus, M. de Fontenelle has narrowly missed aiming a mortal blow at the national taste. The stile which in him is not merely supportable, but attractive, though false, has opened a vast career to our would-be *beaux-esprits*, and if his opinions, and those of M. de la Motte had prevailed in the public mind over the stronger cry of nature, over the tranquil, but constant effect of her beauties, there had been an end of our taste, we should have seen the age of Voiture and other writers equally meagre revive;—we should soon have resembled children who would gladly exchange the Hercules Farnèse or Venus de Medicis for a doll from one of the shops in the *Rue St. Honoré*.

To judge of the extent of our past danger,

to feel how detestable the manner is which the votaries of M. de Fontenelle have endeavoured to establish, we have only to examine the productions of some of those writers who assert that their stile is formed from his; can any thing be more detestable, more insupportable than the works with which they have overwhelmed the public. Happily, and I know not by what miracle such a thing has been brought about in this instance, since perhaps another instance of the kind could scarcely be named,—happily, I say, the good M. de Fontenelle has done by the philosophic spirit which reigns in his works has had its full effect, without the ill that might have been occasioned by the false model given in his style, having had any permanent ill-consequences. For this the nation will owe an eternal obligation to M. de Voltaire, though I think it is one, the extent of which is not sufficiently felt. This great man came at the precise moment to prevent the farther extension of the false *bel-esprit*; thanks to him the Abbé Trublet, and some other insignificant writers, are the only ones now remaining who pass their lives in turning and re-turning phrases, in twisting and twirling laboriously a puerile diction;—who employ themselves, as M. de Voltaire said of Marivaux, in weighing nothings in scales made of a spider's web. The easy and popular philosophy of M. de Voltaire, his style at once simple, natural, and original, the inexpressible charm of his colouring, soon taught us to despise those epigrammatic turns, that equi-

vocal precision, those paltry beauties, to which imitators without taste had given a transient fashion. This true model for style, has since been seconded by all writers of real talents among us. M. de Buffon, if not a deep philosopher, must ever be admired as one of the finest of writers; M. Diderot, in penetrating into the deepest recesses of truth, with a strength and genius rare indeed to be found, has known how to combine in the happiest manner, the most extensive philosophical views, with the most brilliant imagination, and the most exquisite feeling of the fine and beautiful. Jean Jacques Rousseau even, in seeking to establish his paradoxes has supported them in language so simple, yet so nervous, that he well deserves to participate in the glory of the other great men I have named. But for them we should now speak and write an unintelligible jargon. To the simple beauty of such language, M. de Fontenelle was however wholly insensible; I have often had occasion to remark that in whatever was related or read to him. he seemed always looking for the point. Insensible to every other species of beauty, whatever did not conclude with some turn was a nullity to him. He had seen all the great men of the age of Louis the Fourteenth, he had been their contemporary, in some sort their rival, but they were scarcely ever mentioned by him. I am authorised in believing that he held Molière and Racine very cheap, and as to La Fontaine he never mentioned him but to decry him. There are, however, verses of La

Fontaine's, which I had rather have written than all the works of M. de Fontenelle. Corneille was his man, he extolled him above every thing, but he was of his own province, nay more was his uncle. And then what a reasoner, a kind of beauty to touch M. de Fontenelle.

He retained the faculties of his mind to the last, almost unimpaired. But for his deafness, which prevented his mingling in conversation, he would have been as agreeable in company, as if he had not been more than thirty. Not long ago he said to a young woman, in order to make her sensible of the impression her beauty made upon him, *Oh that I were only fourscore years old!* In the course of the malady which terminated his life, he said to some one who asked him what ills he felt: *None, unless it be that of existing*; this was speaking more to the purpose than he generally did. A woman well known in the world, Madame Grimaud, made him a visit about six months ago, being then a hundred and three years old: *My dear Sir*, said she, *Providence seems to have forgot that there are two such beings in the world as you and me.*— M. de Fontenelle put his fingers to his lip, and with a very arch look, said: *Silence!*—It was by a number of such pointed sayings, and ingenious turns, that he rendered himself in his latter years, infinitely agreeable in society.

His private life was uniform and tranquil; he was always cited as a model of discretion; how often has his conduct, in this respect, been set in

opposition to that of M. de Voltaire; but the greatest men have not always the best heads. Many indiscretions may be pardoned to the brilliant and ardent imagination that could produce any thing so fine as Zaïre: of such a genius it may most truly be said that the prudence and discretion of a cold heart, are not worth half so much as the follies of an ardent mind. M. de Fontenelle has often been accused of having a heart little open to feelings of sensibility; it has even been said of him that he never in his life, either laughed or wept. This trait characterizes a man very strongly; it was quite the disposition to live to a hundred years of age. He was a stranger to all tumultuous passions, to all violent emotions, to all those impetuous impulses by which great men are often so much enslaved; but then his frigid heart never felt the enchanting power of beauty, the vivid and delicious impressions of virtue, nor the charms and sweets of friendship. When with dispositions such as these we observe religiously the laws of society, the rules of honour and public decorum, we are exempt from reproach, but we are not the less objects of pity.

Lord Hyde, a man of great talents, who for a long time, from his closet at Paris, directed the House of Commons in London, and who died here of a fall from his horse, somewhat early in life, said once, in remarking upon the long life of M. de Fontenelle, that he for his part could live his hundred years in a quarter of an hour. A fine

idea which proves admirably the great superiority of a heart of sensibility over one which feels nothing. It is difficult to live a long time in a quarter of an hour, when we love nothing but epigram, and it was that alone which could ever make any impression upon M. de Fontenelle; he is said never to have been affected by music or painting, or by any of those arts that often fascinate hearts of a different texture so powerfully. M. Diderot having seen him three or four years ago, for the first time in his life, could not forbear shedding tears at the vanity of literary glory, and of all human things. M. de Fontenelle perceiving his tears, enquired the cause of them; it is, said M. Diderot, that I am impressed with a very singular sentiment. *Sir*, said M. de Fontenelle, stopping him and smiling, *it is now fourscore years since I banished sentiment entirely to the eclogue.* An answer very sufficient to dry tears which tenderness and the love of humanity had called forth from a heart of warm and benevolent feelings.

M. de Fontenelle prided himself much upon never having in his life asked a service of any one; he might have added that he never spontaneously rendered one. A lady of great worth and talents, in whom he placed much confidence, and whom he has, by way of parenthesis, named as executrix of his will, Madame Geoffrin,—this lady has always said that there was but one way of impelling him to do a service, which was to lay your commands upon him, to say *it must be done.* To the

great, *it must*, he never had any thing to reply, but he could not by any means have been brought to feel that it was expedient, or a thing required by humanity. The most horrible trait of his insensibility that has ever been cited, is the story of the asparagus. He was particularly fond of these vegetables, but preferred them very much dressed with oil. One of his friends, I think the Abbé Terrasson, going in one day, intending to dine with him, M. de Fontenelle said that he would make a great sacrifice to him, and have half the asparagus dressed with butter. Before the time of dinner arrived however, the visitor was taken ill, and fell down after a few moments in an apoplectic fit; M. de Fontenelle, on this ran with great haste to the kitchen, calling out: *all with oil, all with oil.* But the most horrible part of this story is, that a short time after, being at dinner with the same Lord Hyde mentioned above, when a dish of asparagus made a part of the bill of fare, he observed that what he had said, seemed to have brought them very much into fashion. With such a mode of thinking, he would probably have had few friends, if the vanity of being connected with a celebrated man, had not led many people to seek his society.

This extreme indifference was so much the leading feature of his character, that is was carried into every thing, and often prevailed over the justness of his thinking, particularly in all matters that were any way connected with sentiment. He

said that if he could hold truth in his hands, as he could a bird, he should certainly stifle it; so much did he consider the noblest gift of Heaven as useless and dangerous to mankind. He had in fact no religion, and this indifference, which he preserved all his life, is much more natural in a mind truly philosophic, than his coldness with regard to truth. He used to say farther, that if he had in his chest a paper of ever so horrible a nature, capable of dishonouring him for ever in the eyes of posterity, he should not give himself any trouble about burning it before his death, provided he could be secure that it would never come to light during his life. This sentiment is not natural. Shame is one of the most powerful feelings of man in a state of society, and he can as little, for the most part, bear the idea of its being attached to his name after his death, as that of living under the opprobrium of it. It was the more extraordinary in the mouth of M. de Fontenelle, as he was excessively eager for praise. He was not at all difficult as to the manner in which it was offered, or as to the person from whom it came, and however strange such an anomaly may appear, one of the most ingenious, the most epigrammatic of minds, a mind even fastidiously delicate on the score of gallantry, could be flattered and delighted with the most vapid and awkward compliments that were lavished upon him by a certain set of people. Somebody saying to him one day, *I wish to compliment you, but I must be endowed with the fine turn*

of your own mind to do it as I wish," he replied, "*Never mind, at any rate compliment.*" I have heard him often complain, as a reproach to his own countrymen, that the English seemed to value him much more highly than they did. *It is*, said Madame Geoffrin, in her easy and good-natured manner, *It is that we see you too near. You know*, she added, *that no man is a hero to his valet-de-chambre.*

These traits will suffice to give you an idea of the character of this literary veteran; one who only wanted, in order to have been a truly great man, a more lively imagination warmed with a heart of greater sensibility; these it is true are not trifles. With so much illumination of mind he had not imagination enough to enter into the career of genius, and owing to the want of sensibility he was devoid of taste. From these defects he became, as we have several times already remarked, a model for a certain class of bad writers, and his decisions in matters of taste are false, inconsistent, and rashly given. It is well known with what zeal both M. de Fontenelle and M. de La Motte disputed the merits of the ancients. Two athletæ of such vast powers have notwithstanding, in spite of the penetration and logic displayed in this idle and ridiculous contest, only excited our pity. It would be difficult to put forth more insipidity and absurdity on any subject, than they have brought together to prove the superiority of the moderns over the ancients. One would almost be tempted to think that

M. de Fontenelle, M. de La Motte, and the Abbé Terrasson made these vast efforts merely to prove the poverty and misery of a mind dead to all impressions of sentiment. It is a blind man who walks on with perfect confidence in the dark, who goes astray methodically, and whom each step conducts into some new error. Woe to the nation if ever its Fontenelle's and La Motte's succeed in throwing down the statues of Homer and Sophocles, of Cicero and Virgil. Under what names will genius ever be revered on earth, if not under the immortal ones of these great men.

I am more disposed than almost any one to overlook those little blemishes which are to be found in the works of M. de Voltaire, and I consider his *Essay on Universal History* as of itself sufficient to immortalize its author if he were in want of any new title to immortality. I cannot then forbear asking how it is possible for so powerful a genius to speak in such slighting terms of Homer as he does, at the beginning of his third volume, in treating of the revival of letters in Italy. He gives the preference to the moderns in almost every thing; he does not hesitate to rank the Orlando Furioso above the Odyssey, and, what is still more extraordinary, the *Gierusalemme Liberata.* of Tasso, above the Iliad. If such a judgment had been given by M. de Fontenelle it would have passed unheeded, no one would have been surprized at it; but that it should come from the pen of M. de Voltaire is wholly inconceivable. I think I have elsewhere re-

marked that the moderns have not even contrived the machinery of their epic poems, that amid the barrenness of their invention they have always had recourse to borrowing from Homer, how little soever such a model was adapted to the subject they were to treat. And even if our modern poets were blessed with Homer's genius, still his poem must be superior to theirs, from the charm given to it by the affecting sublimity and simplicity of the manners he paints. Alas! if this father of poetry were to reclaim from his descendants all that they have borrowed from him, what would remain to us of the Eneïd, the Jerusalem Delivered, the Orlando Furioso, the Lusiad, the Henriade, or any thing else of the kind that could be mentioned.

February, 1757.

I had the honour of announcing to you a very ridiculous tragedy which bears the title of the *Lisbon Earthquake*, the author of which is a hair-dresser, by name André. This piece has thus far been crowned with very great success that it has been sold exceedingly well by the author. The excessive absurdity of the work was its sure passport to success, but 'tis much to be feared that the heads of all the hair-dressers will be turned by it. A wretched wit has just published *The Hair-dressers Encyclopedia for the use of all sorts of Heads, embellished with engravings, and dedicated to M André, hair-dresser, by one of his brethren.*

You will read with great pleasure the letters of

Miss Fanny Butler, to Lord Charles Alfred de Caitombridge, written in 1735, and supposed to be translated from the English in 1756 by Adelaïde de Varançai, in one volume, 8vo. They are the letters of a young woman to her lover, neither of whom, however, ever existed in England. The letters are not the less real ones, not intended for the public but addressed to a favoured lover, as may easily be seen by the warmth, the disorder, the extravagance of them, by the natural and original tone that reigns throughout. They are notwithstanding very unequal; the early letters, in particular, are not written with the same strength as the rest. I suspect that many of them have been altered in several places for publication, perhaps because the author was afraid of being known. This gives them a sort of desultory appearance which diminishes their value; had the same tone of frankness been preserved throughout, the collection would have been charming. Such as they are, you will find letters which will afford you the truest pleasure.

The trade of a panegyrist is a bad one, and often incompatible with the duties of a philosopher. The avocation of the latter is to display the truth upon all occasions in its utmost force and purity, and he cannot withhold it from the public without dishonouring himself. The accusation consequently which I have brought against M. de Voltaire with regard to his *Age of Louis the Fourteenth* is very

heavy, and ought to be supported with strong Proofs. I am however much disposed to believe that a part of this degradation in the author's general tone, and relaxation in the severity of his animadversions is to be ascribed to our being placed too near the period of which he writes, and that the time is not yet arrived for treating of it with proper sincerity and effect. A hundred years hence it will be more justly appreciated than at the present day, every thing, and every body will have found their proper place, and all will go well. History may be compared to large paintings with colossal figures; which should only be contemplated at a certain distance. If we approach too near them we see only vast masses, the justness of the proportions escapes us entirely. What we have said will not indeed fully justify the author of the *Age of Louis the Fourteenth.* We can easily pardon this defect in the extent of his details, but it is not without pain that we see him commend things which he would have censured if they had passed in the time of Francis the First, or if he could have resolved to abandon the trade of a panegyrist. This mania throws a character of want of verity, a something half painful over the whole history, nor do we find in it the superior mind that wrote upon the histories of Henry the Fourth, and Louis the Thirteenth. Was it for M. de Voltaire to make himself an eulogist of the pomp of Louis the Fourteenth, to be dazzled with it like a raw school-boy, to applaud that ill-placed haughtiness with regard to foreign

and weaker nations, which has so long rendered the French name odious in Europe; to excuse, in short, so many things blameable in the eyes of the philosopher, and which history ought never to excuse in deceased sovereigns, that existing ones may learn to tremble for their memories. Louis the Fourteenth was not sufficiently enlightened to play a part worthy of his age. The sort of elevation and love of great things which prevailed in his character not being supported by an enlarged and philosophical mind, he was continually mistaking a vain and empty pageantry for real greatness. With how much ostentation does M. de Voltaire talk of the pensions given by him to foreigners of eminence in science and literature, from one end of Europe to the other. In this munificence there is certainly an air of grandeur, but it is not of that kind which ought to dazzle the eyes of the philosopher. When we consider that Louis the Fourteenth had not in fact any just idea of the real merit of those who were thus recompensed by him, the action is no longer imputable to any thing but ostentation, and wholly loses its value. He would have been much more really great had he endeavoured to alleviate the burdens of his people, than he appears in sending presents to foreigners whose names are already forgotten; and thus it was that Henry the Fourth judged. A King truly great and enlightened would have endeavoured to draw illustrious foreigners into the country, not only by his beneficence, but still more by allowing a perfect religious toleration.

M. de Voltaire relates with a sort of exultation the anecdote of Louis the Fourteenth coming to the parliament in his military boots with his whip in his hand, to compel the enregistering of his edicts; but it was the duty of a historian strongly to have reprobated the indecency of this action, not to have recorded it with approbation. I for my part cannot see any thing like greatness in it; military boots are not becoming to kings, excepting at the head of their armies. I admire Henry the Fourth much more when carrying to the parliament his edicts for raising money, and observing on his coming out that the people did not cry *Vive le Roi*, he went home extremely sad, and said to his courtiers, *They are not satisfied with me, they said nothing*; on which he immediately returned to the parliament and withdrew his edicts, saying, *I had better go without money and see them satisfied.* Such traits as these do indeed merit being recorded in history; they may justly draw tears from posterity. Neither ought the vengeance exercised by Louis towards the republic of Genoa to have been passed over uncondemned by the historian. It was a noble source of triumph forsooth to oppress the weak, who had no power of resistance, and compel them to steps which reflect no dishonour but upon the oppressor,—upon one who could so misuse his power. The arrival of the doge of Genoa, at Versailles, appears to me humiliating only to Louis the Fourteenth. The celebrated saying of the doge on this occasion is known to every body. If he had

been asked what he saw most petty in France, he might have pointed at the King and said *him.*

Louis the Fourteenth did not, in fact, sustain the lustre and glory of his age, and he was unfortunate enough after having seen France at the highest pitch of glory, to which he had not contributed by his genius, to see her decline, of which he was himself the principal cause. But it was just that a Monarch, who had shewn himself proud beyond all bounds, should not die without being humiliated. The epoch of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, a moment forever fatal to France, was that of the decline of the kingdom,—it was the tomb of public prosperity. The Great Men, in every branch of science and learning disappeared, or if any remained it was only here and there a solitary one, like a desolate tree or plant in a soil which had long been cultivated, but on a sudden became wholly neglected;—they only bore witness to the former prosperity of the country without being able to retrace the image of it.

M. de Voltaire would have raised a monument worthy of himself if he had dared to present a picture of the *Age of Louis the Fourteenth* under this point of view, and he would still have found sufficient subjects for panegyric and admiration. The age in which lived a Corneille, a Racine, a Molière, a la Fontaine, a Turenne, a Condé, a Colbert, cannot but be for ever memorable. Our historian carries his fatal indulgence into every thing, from the most important subjects even to the most trivial. In

his chapter upon the finances he breaks out into violent invectives against all those who have ever pleaded the cause of the cultivators, and deplored the misery of the people. What an unworthy part for a philosopher to take!—M. de Voltaire asserts that the labourer is miserable every where, and particularly in Germany. The interest of truth forbids us to be silent; there is in fact no country where the peasant is so miserable as in France; this is the strict truth, and is the great vice of our government. The situation of the English labourer is well known. If M. de Voltaire had talked a little with a husbandman of the country of Altemburg he would have had a more just idea of the German peasant. The labouring Germans are in fact only miserable in the ecclesiastical principalities, because the government of priests and monks is the worst of all governments.

In the chapter upon Calvinism our historian draws an animated picture of the atrocities, and persecutions exercised against the protestants.—This he observes was the work of the clergy, but he does not scruple to add: *It was, after all, the children of the house who did not chuse that strangers introduced by force should become sharers with them.* What a reflection! One would suppose that the Calvinists of the country were not French, that their situation of citizen was precarious, and that right is always on the side of the strongest. In the eyes of the philosopher if the right of citizenship be dis-

putable with any one, it is with this same Catholic clergy whose principles of independence are so much in opposition to the legitimate and sovereign power, and who are not connected with the state by any of those sweet ties of paternity, or family connections, by which nature has united the human species and softened their manners. Not even the fault committed by Louis the Fourteenth, at the beginning of the war of the succession, against the advice of all his Council, in acknowledging the Pretender as King of England, is passed over by M. de Voltaire without an apology. As a politician he ought to have observed that this was the most foolish step Louis could have taken at that time;—as a philosopher he ought to have felt the ridiculous and empty insult thus shewn to a free nation, in thinking of imposing upon it a King whom it had legitimately rejected, and that by almost unanimous consent.

May, 1757.

The day that M. Séguier took his seat at the French Academy in the place of M. de Fontenelle, the President Hénault produced a Dissertation to enquire: *Why the French language was more chaste than the Latin?*—It was thought a very absurd performance both as to the subject and the manner in which it was treated; but the most curious part of the story was, that in a dissertation composed

expressly to decide this important question, no decision was made upon it.

You will read in the second volume of M. de Voltaire's *Essay on Universal History*, that the venerable Council of Constance was very reluctant to condemn the pious doctrine of the Cordelier Jean Petit on the subject of assassination. This holy father maintains that assassination is a meritorious work, more in the hands of a Knight than of a Squire, of a Prince than of a Knight. According to these principles he who assassinates a King is an elect of the first order; the Jesuit, Guignard, was hung for entertaining the same principles. But could the punishment of such a miserable wretch compensate a loss like that of Henry the Fourth; the Parliament ought to have broke Jean Petit with his thesis upon the wheel; the government ought to extirpate every one whose doctrines upon this subject are merely suspected. A Prelate highly respected for the purity of his morals, the Bishop of Soissons, has opposed this abominable doctrine with the utmost vigour, in a charge to his clergy. Never was a charge published that had a more extensive circulation; it has been cried about the streets as the *Fine Charge of the Bishop of Soissons*. It is said that the Jesuits are singularly mortified at it. The following passage is more particularly admirable. "Friends or enemies, "Christians or Infidels, Catholics or Schismatics, "Heretics or Pagans, all are our brethren; we

"ought to cherish them, and we only wish their "happiness." If the Catholic Clergy could ever practice this doctrine with heart and soul, there would be a great diminution of crimes and horrors upon the earth. We ought to put up our ardent prayers that the hearts of all the prelates in France may become as pure as that of the Bishop of Soissons.

In consulting the history of all ages one easily sees that the two occupations to which mankind in general are the most addicted are war and politics; or in other words, as they may be called with great propriety, the sciences of destroying, and of deceiving each other. But in giving to the science of politics all the extent and dignity which it merits from the objects which it includes, namely the happiness and prosperity of the people it must be acknowledged that very little progress has been made in it, and that a wise, just, and enlightened government, will never be any thing but a brilliant chimera. I have sometimes compared the science of politics with that of medicine; they appear to be the two sciences the most necessary to the support of society, and they are notwithstanding precisely those which rest upon the least certain basis, which have made the least considerable advances towards perfection. This reflection would appear a very melancholy one without the consolation that we derive from experience. From that we learn that nations who are not in possession of any

of the knowledge necessary for preserving and for healing themselves, are not the less preserved, do not less continue to exist than those over whom the greatest care is extended, or if you please who are the most abandoned to physicians, and that the government although very ill administered in almost every corner of Europe still subsists, is even supported by its very weakness. It is only individuals who are from time to time the victims of want of skill in the physician, or mal-administration in the government, the thing keeps on its course as a whole, when its vices are not carried to an excess that oversteps all bounds. We must even, I firmly believe, relinquish the hope of ever seeing the sciences in question carried very far among us. The little progress they have made since the days when Greece was in its prosperity, leads to a reasonable conclusion that they were carried at that time as far as the efforts of genius and the human mind are able to go in that direction. In effect can we flatter ourselves with ever seeing any great number of men together excel in sciences which are founded almost entirely upon conjecture; which consequently require a mind of the most just and penetrating cast, great talent, and great sagacity, united with equal depth of thought and judgment in the acquisition of knowledge, and in the application of general principles to particular cases. Abuses and errors will glide in every where, and corrupt the very sources of life, and of the happiness of mankind. The man of a superior mind perceives and corrects

them, the vulgar do not see them, or do not know the remedies that ought to be applied. A person is born a physician or a statesman as he is born a painter or a poet, that is to say, he comes into the world with that sagacity which leads him to penetrate the secrets of nature or of the heart of man, to discover the analogies and dissonances of which both are composed, and to draw certain results from them; to dive in short into the most intricate turnings and windings of nature and of man. To this natural aptitude must be subjoined the ardor necessary in the one case for acquiring a profound knowledge of things connected with the medical science, in the other for acquiring precise notions concerning the strength, the wants, the resources of the body politic. It is true, for the misfortune of human nature, that great men in either of these lines are rare, scarcely does a century produce one in each, and this is the very reason why both must always remain so imperfect. How few physicians of very distinguished eminence have appeared from Hippocrates to Boerhaave, and who can be named as legislators after Solon and Lycurgus? If these principles be just, it must be acknowledged that our makers of books lose their time egregiously when they endeavour to teach us, by their reasoning, an art which requires great talents, and does not admit either of method or general principles.

Let us abandon medicine, and occupy ourselves for the remainder of this disquisition solely with politics. Excellent works may no doubt be

written upon each separate department of government and the laws, and upon the interior administration of a government; but to give general lessons is to be ignorant that the secret of being a statesman is one which cannot be taught, it can only be acquired by the judgment and experience of individuals. It is from the study of history, and of negociations, from attention to public business, that a public man must draw the knowledge necessary to his situation. His business would be curiously executed if he had recourse only to the elementary works of certain cold minds which can give nothing but false ideas, and lead to nothing but making a number of disastrous experiments; for all general principles must be very vague, and the number of times that the rule given will stand may very probably be less than the exceptions to it. He, however, who knows how to make a just application of it to the situation in which he finds himself, would certainly have had no occasion to seek the principle itself in such books as those in question.

I have had the honour of mentioning to you the work upon the *Principles of Negociation* which the Abbé de Mably published not long ago. The government has no doubt been much to blame in taking offence at the noble freedom with which the author gives his opinions upon some transactions of the present moment. It is a fatal principle in a statesman that of endeavouring to put a curb upon the freedom of thought; this is one of those general

rules that we may venture to lay down, because it does not admit of exception. But setting this apart, I do not think that the Abbé de Mably's work merits any high eulogium. Independently of the heavy and involved manner in which he writes, it must be acknowledged that there are few of his principles which may not be disputed, and, in part at least, positively invalidated by examples to the contrary to be met with in almost every page of history. Of what service can such principles be to negociators? Since we must incessantly recur to this great maxim, that negociations ought to be founded upon the reciprocal wants and interests of the parties, is it not much more simple, instead of running into vague theories, to apply ourselves to studying these wants and interests? A grand and noble work might be formed by any one who with an enlarged and reflecting mind would make as clear an exposition as is possible of the situations, the interests, the resources, the wants of each different member of the body politic of Europe, as to its relative situation with the rest. Such a work would be in great measure the history of Europe for two centuries past, and it is there that the negociator would collect more ideas, and more real knowledge, than in all the works that were ever written to instruct him in the principles of his art. It happens very commonly to persons of moderate understandings, that they seek reasonable causes for events which have only been the effect of chance and a concurrence of fortuitous circumstances, and then felicitate them-

selves exceedingly on that happy penetration which, as they say, has led them to see into the most secret springs of the political machine. This is not however the discernment of a person of real talents. The Abbé Mably is very often in this situation; his reflections when they are not very commonplace, often fail in justness, and almost always in illumination. Of this you will find frequent examples in reading his book with a little attention. He enters into a discussion of the system pursued by the Emperor Leopold and the House of Austria, which consists in seeking always its own aggrandisement, in forming great projects, and leaving to posterity mighty expectations with regard to the edifice which it is supposed they are to finish. I shall not take any pains to prove that this may be a very good custom for an ambitious power, I shall content myself with remarking that the reflection it suggests to the Abbé Mably is perfectly false. He says that it is from following like maxims that the House of Austria has seen its power and greatness disappear. Now it happens that the House of Austria never drew its preponderance in Europe from its own actual strength, it was derived entirely from the long weakness of France. This latter country if it did not perish in consequence of all the disasters to which it was so long a victim, must in time recover. It has recovered, and the superiority of the House of Austria has disappeared. Cardinal Richelieu did less injury to the Austrians by establishing the famous system of enmity be-

tween them and the House of Bourbon, than in humbling the pride of the nobles, and strengthening the authority of the King, (which had so long been tottering) over all the orders of the state. From this moment France no longer employing her powers in tearing herself to pieces, must necessarily become the predominant power of Europe, without the House of Austria having committed the least fault, either in its reasonings or in its conduct. This is the fact.—We shall find still more false reasoning upon the conduct of Charles the Second of England. It would be a singular means to adopt for domineering over our allies to unite ourselves with our natural enemies in order to oppress them. One idea wholly new to me, but perhaps just, I have found in this work; this is, that it is not for the interest of Spain to be the ally of France. But since this is contrary to the existing system, and to the commonly received opinion, it ought to have been more fully investigated, and established upon more solid proofs.

July, 1758.

A work has just appeared which has made a great noise, and deserved to do so by the importance of the subject. It is entitled *The Friend of Man, or a Treatise on Population*; and contains an apology for agriculture against the luxury and oppression of a government little enlightened as to its true interests. The author of this work, which is extended to 3 vols. 4to. is the Marquis de Mirabeau,

a Provençal. Although young, he has quitted the service some time, probably from private discontent; he is the grandson of a man who offended Louis the Fourteenth extremely. When the ceremony of dedicating the *Place des Victoires* and the pedestrian statue of the King was to take place;—that statue erected by the adulation of the Duke de la Feuillade, and rendered ridiculous by the extravagant eulogiums inscribed on it, equally in opposition to the true greatness of a hero, and the noble liberty of the citizen;—when this ceremony, I say, was to take place, a regiment of the guards was ordered to assist at it. M. de Mirabeau, who had a company in the regiment, was going to his appointed station, at the head of his troop, when, passing over the Pont-Neuf, he made all the men stop before the statue of Henry the Fourth, and, addressing them, said, "*My friends, let us salute* "*him, he is well worth any other.*" This was an ill-chosen moment to pay such a tribute to the great and good Henry; it displeased the King so much, that M. de Mirabeau was ordered to resign his company. In complying with this order, he only desired to give his resignation into the King's own hands; when, presenting it, he said, "Sire, "I have the honour of thanking your Majesty, "that, after having served you for forty years, you "are pleased entirely to dispense with my having "any feelings of gratitude."

Such was the grandfather reported to have been. Let us now advert again to the work of the

grandson. The bold strain in which it is written has acquired it a very high reputation, which has been not a little increased by the imprudence of the government in ordering it to be suppressed. To give an idea of the work in a few words, I may say that the author would have erected himself a noble monument, if he had been able to write with grandeur and elevation of stile.

The seventh volume of the Encyclopædia appeared about a month ago. It will not diminish the reputation of the work; few works ever had equal success: the number of subscribers is already increased to four thousand. The animosity of the enemies to the Encyclopædia, and its enemies are not few in number, is consequently redoubled. Reports are circulated, pamphlets are written, all the most odious and absurd imputations that it can be charged with, are received with transport and avidity, and circulated assiduously. But even those pamphlets which are most gratifying to the public malignity die away at the end of a week or ten days, while the work remains. A new pamphlet has just appeared against the Encyclopædists, entitled *Memoirs relative to the History of the Cahouacs*; it is reported to be the production of a Jesuit. If the author had as much imagination as he has malignity, and desire of injuring, he would be a very formidable enemy. His aim is to prove that Messieurs de Montesquieu, de Voltaire, de Buffon, d'Alembert, Diderot, and Rousseau, entertain princi-

ples pernicious to society, and dangerous for the public tranquillity. It is the last resource of the base to attack by odious inductions the opinions of those philosophers and men of genius whose writings do honour to their age and nation; and this may be done with the greater safety, as none of them can answer the charges without incurring some danger. But the most odious part of these imputations is the endeavouring to make the Encyclopædia be considered as the compilation of a party in the State, united in opinions and interests. This is so far from being the case, that of fifty writers concerned in the work there are not three who live together on terms of intimacy, many have no sort of connection the one with the other, and many are even unacquainted with each other's persons.

Among the articles in this volume, that upon Geneva by M. d'Alembert has made much noise. The author advances, very inconsiderately, that the theologians of Geneva are Socinians, and even Deists. This is an indiscretion so much the more unpardonable, as M. d'Alembert certainly had no intention of offending the republic of Geneva.

January, 1758.

The Rêveries of Marshal Saxe has experienced the fate of all works of genius. It has been warmly admired by the small number of good judges who know the real value of things, and who establish upon a solid foundation the reputations of men and of books; while fools have not known what to

make of it, and in proportion to their own self-sufficiency have determined it to be, in point of merit, extremely below the fame of the author. The work, however, possesses all the characteristics of true genius; it is written with the utmost simplicity; it abounds with views of things absolutely new, and is, if we may thus express ourselves, so much the friend of good-sense, that it is not necessary to have a profound knowledge of the profession of arms to understand and feel its merits. It is true, that pedantry, a quality more common in the military profession than in any other, must be shocked, at every page, at the ideas put forth by the illustrious author. Narrow and contracted minds cannot relish a work which, at every moment, overturns commonly-received customs, and demonstrates the danger and futility of them. We are more attached than any other people of Europe to forms and method. Every thing that deviates in the slightest degree from the ordinary routine astonishes, and we know not what to think of it till the small number of enlightened judges have by their decisions fixed our wavering judgments. This attachment to long-established ideas forms a singular contrast with the lightness and versatility of character so generally ascribed to the French nation.

The world therefore began by considering the *Rêveries* as a very moderate work, not by any means worthy of its author; but this opinion is every day changing, and it will soon be ranked by general consent among the works that ought to be

handed down to posterity. The magnificent edition which the booksellers of Paris have published from the original manuscript has been augmented with several very interesting papers. You will read with great pleasure one upon population, although the editor pronounces it not worthy of its author: I am far from being of that opinion. A few letters of the Marshal's, published in this edition, make us regret extremely that any which he may have written upon the subject of his profession should be lost; a collection of them would be a truly valuable present to the public. We are astonished to see this hero predict all the misfortunes which happened to the Emperor Charles the Seventh of Bavaria, from having preferred the conquest of Bohemia to that of Austria; and the letter addressed in the year 1749 to the Count d'Argenson, then minister at war, upon the different exercises that they wished to introduce into the infantry, must make every true Frenchman tremble. The Marshal there demonstrates very clearly, that nothing is to be done without discipline, and that there is no occasion to seek elsewhere for the source of all our misfortunes than in the neglect of so essential a point. In fact, when we hear of the great things done by the French in the last century, under the Viscount de Turenne and the great Prince of Condé, sufficient attention is not paid, in my opinion, to the spirit of discipline which then existed among our troops, and which they had imbibed in the armies of Gustavus Adolphus,

through the medium of the celebrated Bernard, Duke of Weimar. The example of the King of Prussia ought to convince us more than ever, that every thing great and solid achieved in military operations, has its source in the perfect discipline of the troops: all else is false and fleeting, and shines but with a transient lustre.

To these *Rêveries* is prefixed a *Sketch of the Life of Marshal Saxe*, which not only contains a great many blunders, but is written in a style singularly flat and dull. It is a great reproach to the booksellers that so splendid an edition of the work is disfigured by a history so little worthy of the hero to whom it relates. This has not prevented the Abbé Perau's boldly putting his name in the title. It must surely be very much astonished to find itself side by side with that of Marshal Saxe. This illustrious warrior, placed between the times of Charles the Twelfth of Sweden and Frederick the Second of Prussia, was the man of all Europe who, during this interval, best merited to be handed down to posterity by the pen of M. de Voltaire. He was one of the handsomest men of his time; to a majestic figure he united features that had something in them altogether grand and noble, with perfect sweetness and simplicity of expression. Among his greatest qualities are to be reckoned an unshaken resolution, and an unalterable tranquillity of mind which never forsook him. During that admirable campaign of Courtrai, in 1744, which has since been considered as a master-piece

of skill and address, every one knows that, with an army of forty thousand men, he hindered that of the allies, double in number, from undertaking any thing. But it is not known that he had, upon this occasion, to contend more strongly against the officers under him than against the enemy. It was boldly said in his anti-chamber, that he was ruining France, that his inactivity and tenacity would be fatal; nothing could shake him. He observed sometimes to those whom he could venture to speak to freely, in mentioning the refractory officers of his army, *they have flies in their ears.* It was not that he did not see all the dangers of his position as clearly as any other person; but he knew well what the enemy would, and what they would not, dare to undertake. He was never deceived; and if he had been, he would have known how to employ those resources of his powerful mind, which never failed him, in repairing a false estimation in this respect. Such equanimity of soul is one of the first qualities in the leader of an army; the confidence of the soldiers, and the success of his enterprises, equally depend upon it. Marshal Saxe, in the midst of the pleasures of Paris, never lost sight of his profession; he was always occupied with it. He used to walk up and down his study, in his morning-gown, reflecting, and combining his operations. The fertility of his genius was so great, that he never gave himself the trouble of preparing his resources before-hand; he was sure of not failing, and this gave him a feeling of perfect security;

the sentiment was even carried so far, that he never recollected distinctly, for any length of time after, the details of his most brilliant actions. He treated them as we treat the ordinary, every-day transactions of our lives; the events of which, little remarkable, leave no permanent impressions upon the memory. In the visits which he made to Berlin, in 1749, when the King of Prussia questioned him concerning his campaigns in Flanders, he appeared better instructed in the details of them than the Marshal was himself. The high estimation in which he was held by Frederick constitutes at present one of his greatest eulogiums.

The Marshal loved pleasure to excess. He found what is called fine company dull, he did not frequent it; and this has been made a heavy accusation against him. Those who knew him considered it as proceeding from a certain haughtiness of mind. He never ceased to entertain projects of sovereignty and independence; and his lofty soul, not being able to exact from the world that degree of respect which is considered as due only to princes and sovereigns, was obliged to seek it among subalterns in his profession, and women of pleasure. For the rest, he had great goodness of heart, great simplicity of manners, and was mild and modest in his deportment. So many good qualities were however not unmingled with defects. One of the greatest he had was that of not believing in the existence of virtue or of honest men. It was owing to this terrible prejudice that he was so

often surrounded with scoundrels who tarnished his glory in proportion as it depended upon the baseness of their conduct.

Next to M. de Voltaire, I do not know any living author who writes history better than the King of Prussia. A continuation of the *Memoirs of the House of Brandenburg* has just been published, which contains the life of the late King. It is a robbery from the august author of these Memoirs. Those whose intimacy with the monarch enable them to decide upon his productions, say that it is very much mangled. It is written in a rapid style, and gives a very fine picture of the affairs of Europe. The only thing to be wished for, and this apparently is what has been mangled, is greater amplitude in some of the details, particularly in all that relates to the interior government of a power, the sudden aggrandisement of which borders on a prodigy. This work will afford you great pleasure; you will find many striking passages, and some really affecting.

M. Nicol, Dean of the Royal Academy of Sciences, is just dead, at a very advanced age. He was an excellent geometrician, and as such held for awhile, in conjunction with M. de Mairan, the first rank in the Academy; though both have since been eclipsed by Messrs. Fontaine, Clairaut, and d'Alembert. The first, who lives in the country, and rarely comes to Paris, is considered by good

judges, as the ablest geometrician in the kingdom; his works bespeak a great genius, and those to whom he is known have no difficulty in persuading themselves that he is so. He is a man of a very acute and original turn of mind, combining great penetration with the most perfect simplicity. One day the Abbé Nollet was reading in the Academy a long tedious sort of tariff of the prices of various commodities; M. Fontaine, wearied to death with the length to which it was spun out, said: *This man knows the value of every thing, except time.* If this remark had been uttered at Athens, Plutarch would not have failed to hand it down to posterity. M. Clairaut, while yet a child, had a high reputation for geometry, which he has not since falsified. M. d'Alembert, without having invented any thing new, has the reputation of putting great precision and clearness, combined with great elegance, in his geometrical works. These three young geometricians have entirely obliterated the remembrance of all others, even of M. de Maupertuis. He, though one of the first disciples of Newton in France, never could rise above mediocrity.

February, 1758.

It is said that the King, with a view to encouraging talents, has ordered that any dramatic author, whose writings shall be extremely successful, shall for the first piece be presented to him, for the second he shall have a gold medal, and for the third shall have a pension. If this arrangement

do not produce Corneilles and Racines, it at least does much honour to the monarch, to the government, and to the age.

The Narrative just printed by the Court of Portugal against the Jesuits of Paraguay has made much noise here; a translation has been printed in French, with the original text on the opposite side. I do not think that the Reverend Fathers will speedily make any answer to it, unless in the country of Paraguay itself, by driving out their *Most Catholic* and *Most Faithful* Majesties, sword in hand, from the whole continent of South America. It is curious enough to see the Jesuits juggling the empire of the New World from two sovereigns, who on their side are reduced to the necessity of carrying on a war of manifestoes against them. It is to be presumed that Paraguay will become, under the conduct of the Jesuits, a powerful empire, which will subdue all South America, and totally annihilate the authority of the European sovereigns on that continent. Whatever may be said with respect to the justice and regularity of the proceedings of the reverend fathers, we cannot but believe the people of Paraguay to be one of the most happy now existing upon the earth. We may console ourselves, however, with the idea that they will one day become corrupt, like all the other nations of the globe,—that their turn will come as well as ours. Within a few days a memorial has

been added to this pamphlet, to serve as an illustration of it.

April, 1758.

A work has been published this winter, at Geneva, entitled *Political Annals, by the Abbé de St. Pierre*, an author already well known from numerous writings, and still more from his practical philosophy, his benevolence and his goodness of heart. Though these Annals are not very popular in our great world, I do not doubt but you will read them with pleasure, and find them as greatly instructive as they are little brilliant. Good-sense is a precious quality in a writer; and, if it be united with a small portion of philosophy, it is ten times more estimable than those flashes of genius, after which we run with so much ardour. Not that the Abbé de St. Pierre's work is wholly devoid of these; there are many passages written with great eloquence, in particular the portrait of the Chancellor Le Tellier.

As the judgments which our author passes upon men and things are commonly very just, and as he possesses in a high degree the art of engaging the confidence of his readers, it is proper to analyse some of his observations which appear to be defective in justness. The reflections, in particular, which he makes upon the adventure of the Count d'Estrades, ambassador of France to London, with the ambassador of Spain, M. de Watte-

ville, are those of a good man; but we must not let our mildness make us forget all consideration of the dignity that ought to be maintained between crowned heads. The fact, as stated by him, is well known. The coachman of the Count d'Estrades was beaten, and the traces of his horses cut, by M. de Watteville's people, on the Count's public entry into London as ambassador, in 1662. "Here," says our author, "was damage done to "the amount of a hundred francs; but was the "King of France less esteemed, less feared, held "in less consideration among other powers, for the "phrenzy of M. de Watteville?—If the latter was "a madman, if the Count d'Estrades was piqued, "must France be put to an expense of a hundred "millions of money, and must the lives of thirty "thousand men be sacrificed to unpique the Count "and repair the traces of his horses?—Or if the "King of Spain was mad enough not to make an "apology, must the King of France be unjust "enough to take vengeance at such a price?"—This is very false reasoning. Undoubtedly the King of France would have been less esteemed, less feared, held in less consideration, if he had patiently sat down under the damage done to the amount of a hundred francs. It is of the greatest importance to a private person not to pass over the least insult. Those by whom it is offered, and those who witness it, will soon make their advantage of this patience; and, for want of a little resolution in the first instance, he exposes himself

to greater insults and greater violence. Kings are in this respect precisely in the same situation as private persons;—long forbearance appertains to God alone. If Louis the Fourteenth had shown a want of firmness on this occasion, he would soon have been despised by his enemies, and neglected by his friends. Every one would have thought that they might attack him and insult him with impunity; and they would have had reason to think so. He would have betrayed weakness, and people would have been well aware that they might do any thing with a weak man;—instead of this they are sensible that they must take care how they conduct themselves towards a man of resolution. The ruin or the preservation of a State may often depend upon the greater or less attention shown to these apparently trifling circumstances.

I conceive that our ministry committed a great fault not long since in the affair of Mandrin. If it be true that the King of Sardinia had been required in vain to deliver up that scoundrel to whom an asylum was so indecently given in his country, a body of fifty or a hundred thousand men ought to have been sent, without any ceremony, to seize him. Instead of this a party was dispatched to carry him off secretly; we violated the territory of an independent sovereign, and we have been obliged to send an extraordinary embassy to make apologies. "But," our Abbé would say, "ought France "to have lavished a hundred millions of money "and thirty thousand men upon a miserable scoun-

" drel ?"—I answer yes, it ought to have done so; since the consideration in which we were to be held in the world depended upon it, and our existence depends upon that consideration. It would have been known all over Europe that justice cannot be denied to France, and a war for such a purpose is the only one that can be supported with as much reason as glory. Besides, is it not obvious, that no sooner had a serious declaration to this effect been made to the King of Sardinia, than the culprit would have been delivered up, and all Europe would have applauded our conduct. For, let people say what they will, he who seeks to make his rights respected, without overstepping the bounds of justice, has the voices of all mankind with him. The Abbé de St. Pierre is therefore in the wrong to place the affair of the Count d'Estrades among minutiæ; if Louis the Fourteenth had been endowed with as much genius as decision of character, he would indeed have been a great man.

LETTER *to M.* D'ARGENTAL *from the late Marquis* DE ROCHEMORE.

When capricious fate, to signalize her instability, reduced me from a state of great affluence almost to indigence, I affected the indifference and stern stoicism of the wise man, whose elevated soul contemplates prosperity and adversity with an equal eye. But in secret, when this garment of ceremony was thrown aside, despairing, pierced

to the soul, I mourned the caprice of the blind deity; then it was that thy friendship, thy tenderness, that constant goodness which interested itself in my sorrows, recalled my resolution, and made me ashamed of my weakness. "What?" said I, "is all that show, all that pomp, which I regret, "worth the smallest particle of the friendship la- "vished upon me by so generous a bosom?"—Yes, my dear Argental, it was you that consoled me, it was you that compensated to me all my losses; but what can ever console me for having lost you?—this is a misfortune that does not admit of consolation. I seem not to have lived a single moment since I quitted you.

To complete my misfortune, I am shut up in a melancholy castle,—with what society, good heavens?—two superannuated old women, whom the fates, in a moment of forgetfulness, have left so long in the world. In this species of interment are my sad days consumed. Do you not now feel all the horrors of my situation? I see my Celia no longer, and I am separated from you. Some dissipation at least was requisite to banish the cruel reflections which follow me every where; but duty, and the rules of that troublesome thing called decorum, detain me in this most deplorable of all abodes. I see nothing but wrinkles, spectacles, and the breviary of our priest, an asthmaticky old man, who has yet some remains of having been a jolly fellow. I cannot paint to you, in colours sufficiently expressive, our evenings after supper, and

the place where these sittings are held. It is a large saloon, which is contemplated by the owners with profound veneration as a proof of nobility; a single lamp illuminates it, which permits us only to have a confused glimpse of the *Nativity of our Saviour*, and the *Judgment of Paris*, two pieces of tapestry humorously associated together as the decorations of the walls. The oddness of the combination always makes me laugh; and this laugh, which is considered by the two old ladies as a mark of contempt, draws upon me a torrent of abuse from them. I answer with the deepest humility, hoping that under favour of the darkness I may be able to sleep away the time; but the important questions put to me, and the incessant recapitulation of my faults, which is a never-failing part of the evening's amusement, keep me awake, and put me at last so out of temper, that when it comes to a separation for the night, we do not part with the kindest looks possible at each other.

Such is the place I inhabit, such the persons to whose society I am condemned; and I am nevertheless told, that I ought not to quit the spot, and abandon my family. The names of country and relationship are phantoms very generally adored, but let us acknowledge that there is no small degree of folly in these prejudices. What? if I had chanced to be born in the frozen regions of Scythia, must I have been compelled to pass my life in so horrible an abode?—Must I, in spite of the furious winds, of the wintry storms, have preferred my

dreary country to all the loveliest spots in the universe?—No; for my part, I abandon this illustrious mania to the lofty souls of antiquity.—And yet, if we examine the thing more closely, we shall find that it is a sentiment which many of them exalted more in their words than by their practice. That model of wisdom, that sage hero, whom the good Homer is always presenting to us roaming hither and thither in search of his solitary island, was yet not in such haste to reach this cherished spot, but that it was forgotten amid the fascinations of Calypso and of Circe. Blessed in their society, the sacred names, the solemn ties of country and of citizen were thought of no more;—nay, in spite of this boasted love of his native soil, in spite of that lively and constant desire to be restored to it, which rendered Ithaca always so present to his mind,—in spite of these things, he had the address, after Troy was vanquished by Greece, to pass the latter years of his youth in the arms of many a deity, under the specious veil of sad necessity. What ingenuity!—what dexterity!—how happy a guide is wisdom!—At length, when his powers began to decay, and he was deprived of all farther hope of pleasing, he returned to his own country, since nothing better remained for him. For my part, the love for my country, which is so much vaunted, is a thing which I cannot, nor ever shall feel.

Do not show this letter, and above all things do not on any account let it go out of your own hands: you cannot distress me more than by so

doing. I speak very seriously, it would almost kill me with chagrin;—the reasons must be plain to you. Satisfy me speedily on this head.

May, 1758.

I had hoped to have been able to add to my present communication the *Letter from Eloïsa to Abelard,* a free translation from the English of Pope, by M. Colardeau. It has been handed about Paris for some time, in manuscript, but is just now printed by the author. You will, I am sure, be much pleased with it. There is great loftiness in the style, and the verses are no way deficient in warmth. I know not whether the answer of *Abelard,* which has just appeared, be also from M. Colardeau, but it appears to me only an insipid repetition of the sentiments contained in Eloïsa's letter.

M. Antoine de Jussieu is just dead at a very advanced age; he was a physician of the faculty at Paris. Our physicians in general are reproached with their extravagant use of bleeding; M. Jussieu had such an aversion to it that he never would order it to any patient. Having an attack of apoplexy himself, he employed the first moments of his returning senses to prevent the people about from bleeding him. He died firm to his faith. His brother, M. Bernard de Jussieu, is the greatest botanist in the kingdom.,

The Congress of Cythera is a well known *Jeu-d'Esprit* of the Count Algarotti. It has just been translated into French, by a lady, as it is said, who does not chuse to be known. The following is the abstract of it as given by M. Diderot.

" No one knew what was become of the God of Love.—He was shut up in his temple, meditating upon the discredit into which his empire was beginning to fall.. By his side was Voluptuousness, who was in a languishing state, while the Sports and the Smiles fluttered only one wing, and the Graces were growing sad. What to do he knew not. Voluptuousness counselled him to inform himself thoroughly upon the whole extent of the ill before he thought of remedying it. The God of Love approved the counsel, and three young Loves were instantly dispatched, the one to France, where he was in a moment; a second to England, where the poor little creature was in great danger of dying of the vapours, and being suffocated with the smoke; the third to the route of Italy, where he paused at every step, such numbers of beautiful things did he find to admire. They all however arrived at their destinations, and returned bringing with them three women each perfectly instructed in the state of amorous concerns in their respective countries.

" The journey of the Frenchwoman was short; the Frenchwomen are brisk and active in all their movements. The Englishwoman had fits of spleen by the way which retarded her very much

the Italian woman would only travel by night so much was she afraid of being watched. The God of Love expected their arrival with impatience; at length they were presented before him. They were informed of the reasons why their presence was requested; all three began to speak at once. The quiver was taken from one of the Loves; three tickets were put into it, the youngest of the Graces drew one,—it was the Englishwoman's,—she drew again, it was that of the Frenchwoman;—that of the Italian remained at the bottom of the quiver. They spoke in this order.

"The Englishwoman said, in a few words, that love was unknown in her country;—that the men, fierce and brutal, passed their lives in three sorts of stupidity,—with wine, with prostitutes, or with politics.—The Frenchwoman said that her country was the most charming country in the world; that they did nothing but love there from morning to night, and offered more sacrifices in one day to the Deity they adore, than are offered in a year in all the other countries of the globe. In this happy country, she said, tenderness was reduced to its just value, they had pleasure there without pain, and lovers without any consequences. That indeed the lovers were not the most discreet in the world, and were apt to talk a little, but it was no longer the fashion to blush at it. All this, she proceeded, was very well, and they might believe her, because she had taste, indeed, to speak with frankness, she did not know any body who had so

much. The God of Love, she said, in short had nothing better to do than to establish French gallantry over the whole globe, and to propose her as a model to all women, because she might venture to say, without vanity, that he would find it much easier to propose worse than better.—The Italian woman complained of the oddness of people in her country, who were nevertheless, as she believed, not destitute of resources. She afterwards launched into invectives against the pleasures of the senses, and began with all her eloquence to preach the charms of Platonic love.

"Although she spoke like an angel, and often cited Petrarch, who for twenty years had sung and loved Madam Laura with all due honour and decorum, and wept and sung her twenty more, the God of Love could not forbear yawning, while the Frenchwoman burst into a fit of laughter. The Italian then understood that she had spoke long enough, and was silent. The God immediately rose from his throne, and whispered a word to Voluptuousness, when she pronounced the following judgment:—That in England they should, without delay, begin to love; not however making too serious an affair of it:—that in France a little more importance should be attached to it; and that in Italy they would do well to spiritualize it somewhat less. She added many other fine things, in the midst of which the God of Love disappeared, and the three women quitted the temple. They each found lovers in the vestibule.

The Englishwoman began to assume a lively air, and seemed no more menaced with vapours; an impression of languor and melancholy appeared in the looks of the Frenchwoman; while in the Italian were to be perceived, amidst an air of passion, feelings ardent enough, and little platonic. A collation was served, in which the Englishwoman drank of the *liqueurs* of Italy, which she highly commended; the Frenchwoman tasted the beer of England, which she found excellent; and the Italian was regaled with some glasses of sparkling Champagne, which gave her infinite vivacity."

This conclusion of the work appears to me bad, because it does not make the reader either feel or think.

August, 1758.

The Abbé Prevost has at length published the conclusion of his translation of *Sir Charles Grandison*. After keeping us waiting three or four years for the conclusion of this novel, we had reason, as it appears to me, to expect that we should be repaid for it by the pains which the translator had bestowed upon the work. This is by no means the case. M. Prevost, who was guilty of great mutilation in the latter volumes of Clarissa, of which there was not a word to be lost, has absolutely massacred Sir Charles Grandison; he has even dared to abridge and spoil the story of Clementina, which is a master-piece of genius from beginning to end. All persons of taste will prefer

a translation of this novel, just published in Holland, to that of the Abbé Prevost. The Holland publication, though written in a style in many places very barbarous, has at least the merit of being a faithful translation. It remains for me to discuss the novel itself, and the genius of Mr. Richardson, the author of these prodigious works; but this will afford matter for future pages. There are few modern works which display so much true genius as the novels of Pamela, Clarissa, and Sir Charles Grandison.

M. Helvetius, son to the Queen's first physician, a man who has already obtained some reputation, has just published a large volume in 4to. entitled *The Mind.* This work has occasioned a great commotion among the public; the devout, and the people of the great world, equally exclaim against it; and it has been suppressed, by a decree of his Majesty's Council of State, as scandalous, licentious and dangerous. The author, who fills the place of *Maître d'Hôtel* to the Queen, has been obliged publicly to retract his opinions. This was done in a letter addressed to a Jesuit; but this retractation not appearing sufficient, he was made to sign a second, so humiliating, that one should not have been surprised to see a man take refuge among the Hottentots, rather than submit to make such acknowledgments. Here is a fine piece of work. I know not whether any literary glory can suffice to compensate all the disagreeable conse-

quences the author has experienced from his publication; it appears to me, however, that those who judge the most favourably of it, though they may allow it merit in many respects, refuse it the most precious quality that a work can have—genius.

September, 1758.

M. Bouguer, of the Royal Academy of Sciences, is just dead, at more than sixty years of age. This academician, who was considered as a man of distinguished merit, was among the number who were some time since sent by the King to the two extremities of the globe, in order to measure some degrees; an enterprise which was celebrated by all descriptions of people, and was in fact of no real use whatever. M. Bouguer travelled to the South with M. de la Condamine and others, with whom he afterwards had long and obstinate quarrels.

December, 1758.

I mentioned, on a former occasion, that M. d'Alembert had inserted in the seventh volume of the Encyclopædia an article respecting the Republic of Geneva, which made a great noise. In the midst of the praises given, with reason, to many of the institutions of this little state, he considers Socinianism as the prevailing principle among the ministers of religion. It is not with the intention of injuring them, or giving them pain, that he has made this extraordinary assertion; on the con-

trary, it is very obvious that he means to do honour to the partisans of natural religion, by showing that so wise and enlightened a body as the Genevese clergy hold doctrines approaching so near to the dogmas of a pure and rational mode of faith. This zeal is very singular. We are not accustomed to find in philosophers a zeal so apostolic; and intolerant philosophers merit no more indulgence than persecuting devotees. The clergy of Geneva have conducted themselves on this occasion with great prudence; they have opposed to M. d'Alembert's article, a Declaration, drawn up with great wisdom, dignity and moderation. I shall only remark, by the way, that we cannot, nor ought not, to judge the opinions of any set of men as a body, but by their statutes and regulations; and, in matters of religion, by their symbolic books, never by the opinions of any individual among them. When I say that such a one is a Protestant, I do not mean to assert that he follows implicitly the doctrines of Luther, or of Calvin, but merely that he belongs externally to the communion of such or such a sect; one cannot, in short, speak in a public way of the religious opinions of any individual without imprudence and injustice.

But this is not the only extraordinary part of the article in question. Among other things, M. d'Alembert recommends to the republic the establishment of a theatre, and dilates much upon the advantages that would be derived from it with respect to the taste and manners, not of the town

of Geneva only, but of almost all Europe. The whole of the article ought to be read; it is impossible not to acknowledge it perfectly extravagant. Our philosophers are indeed sometimes terrible madmen. Nothing can be more misplaced than such an article is, take it all together, in the Encyclopædia, where the town of Geneva ought to occupy a space of half a dozen lines, not whole columns. This was not the proper place to descant on what it ought, and what it ought not to do, in things absolutely foreign to those Arts and Sciences which form the object of the work. It is a very common observation, that one extravagance engenders another; and this is the case here. Jean Jaques Rousseau, the *Citizen of Geneva*, as he calls himself, *par excellence*, could not pass over such an opportunity of putting forth his sentiments on a subject which he considers as of the last importance to his fellow-citizens. He has addressed a letter of two hundred and sixty-four pages to M. d'Alembert, to refute this article, and to prove, in the first place, that plays are in themselves very pernicious things; and, in the second, that they would be particularly dangerous and injurious to the republic of Geneva. M. Rousseau was born with all the talents of a sophist. Specious arguments, a torrent of captious reasoning, a great deal of art and artifice, combined with an eloquence at once masculine, simple, and affecting, will always render him a formidable adversary to whoever he attacks. But, notwithstanding the

enchantment of his style and the magic of his colouring, he will never convince; because, after all, there is nothing but truth that can convince. We are always tempted to say, *that it is very fine, but it is very false.*

Although the new work of M. Rousseau, of which we are speaking, appears to me diffuse, languid, and in many places even flat, I do not doubt but that you will read it with pleasure, though at the conclusion you will be surprised to find that he has not effected any change in your sentiments upon any subject. In the manner which M. Rousseau treats things, there is nothing that might not be overthrown, especially by a wrist as powerful as his. Nothing being without its objectionable side, I could easily prove that the sun is the most deleterious and dangerous object in the creation, by merely observing a profound silence as to all the blessings which we derive from it, and only setting forth the ills it produces, not forgetting those that it is possible it might eventually produce. According to the proportion of eloquence, of wit, and of talent, employed in support of my hypothesis, should I succeed in composing a seductive work; but even those who received the greatest pleasure from reading me would not the less, as before, consider the sun as an object indispensably necessary to us, as the source of all our greatest blessings. I must therefore farther remark, that it would be entirely lost labour to attempt seriously to answer and refute M. Rousseau,

with regard to what he says against plays in general, and that it would be a very ill-advised undertaking in any one who could not write with as much force and energy as he does. People of any talents, or possessing ever so little common-sense, will refute the Citizen's arguments as they read, and will not want to have the refutations pointed out to them. In doing justice to the talents of the author, they will not the less remark a want of logical reasoning through the whole of the work; so that what he labours to establish in one place, is destroyed, some pages after, by an assertion which, though perhaps it may not be in direct opposition, is extremely contradictory to it. This concussion of principles diametrically opposite the one to the other, advanced to suit the pressure of the moment, and forgotten a moment after to make way for others which can never be reduced into any consonance with them, has been always a subject of reproach to the Citizen of Geneva; and never was it more glaring than in his philippic against the theatre:—added to this, his captious and unfounded reasonings are commonly brought forward with such warmth and vehemence, that he seems as if he wanted to blunt those perceptions, which he cannot wholly resist, of the falsehoods he is maintaining. In a word, if M. Rousseau considers acting as coming under the description of the imitative arts, and condemns it as such, the question is resolved into the dangerous nature of the Arts and Sciences themselves, which he has

so long maintained. If, admitting the cultivation of genius and the arts among a polished people, he would banish theatrical exhibitions, he can only advance things absurd and false in support of his thesis. Hitherto our philosopher has confined himself to maintaining paradoxes of a very general nature, such as the dangers of the sciences, or the dangers of living in societies; and with eloquence like his, it is easy to find something specious to say upon these subjects: but if he begins to particularize his paradoxes, whatever may be the power of his style, he cannot avoid running into palpable absurdities.

Madame de Graffigny died some days ago, at somewhat more than sixty years of age. She is celebrated as the author of *Peruvian Letters*, a work which has been extremely admired, and for the comedy of *Cenia*, which is never played but with great applause. This lady was not so agreeable in conversation as in her writing; there was something ordinary and trifling in her manner. Those, however, who knew her intimately, say, that these faults disappeared in proportion as she became eager upon the subject on which she was talking.

LETTER *from Madame* DE L'EPINAY *to M.* DE SAINT LAMBERT.

Geneva, 15th December, 1758.

If we lived in the age of Merlin, a period when every one was somewhat versed in the Black

Art, when some malignant spirit might keep one fast asleep for any time that suited his pleasure, I might very well make you believe that my silence has been the effect of a charm, and that I have been asleep for a whole year, or near it. Indeed, my dear Sir, I should be but too fortunate if I had such an excuse to offer; but it is no such thing; much suffering, extreme weakness, and a habit, which has been creeping on me for several months, of doing nothing, are the only apologies I can make for the inactivity of my pen. The desire of recalling myself to the recollection of my friends, and more particularly of yourself, has however, at length, come irresistibly upon me, and restored my faculties. As in a rigorous and severe winter, when the course of a clear and peaceable stream has been suspended by the ice, under the influence, at length, of a beneficent sun, it becomes more rapid than before,—so death, with his livid hue and haggard eyes, has long been seen ready to freeze my senses, while my mind depressed, in these sad moments regretting every thing and desiring nothing, without hope, without support, thought every moment that my life was protracted idle and vain. But at length a well known sound breaks in upon this lethargy, I open my eyes, I breathe again, I revive,—it is the voice of friendship that calls; I obey, I acknowledge its empire.

It is but just, Sir, that you should early feel the fruits of my restoration; and since it is at present perfectly established, to you I consecrate the

first cheerful ideas that have in consequence become my inmates, and which arise chiefly from thinking of you. With how much pleasure do I recall the idea of so many friends dear to my heart, occupied for ever with my happiness;—and that this was so you have given me repeated proofs. Among you, while sentiment has nothing left to desire, every thing most agreeable in society is enjoyed. O my friends! when shall I be able to rejoin you? The future, when it is too seductive, becomes a chimera, and would soon be a torment; but reason, wise and severe, teaches us to turn every instant to profit by making use of the present. This is less difficult here than elsewhere, but we must be upon our guard against the first *coup-d'œil.* The environs of Geneva are entirely of a kind to frighten a French head, and especially that of a female who has never before quitted her own country. Here we see nothing, save lofty mountains covered with eternal snow or arid fields, but the people at the same time, protected by them, derive more solid benefits from their situation, as it appears to me, than any of which we are so vain. Here are no brilliant equipages, no gilded palaces, no superb trains of attendants;—destitute of pomp and pageantry, their pure and tranquil minds seem animated only by wisdom, by equity, by the love of liberty; the simplicity of their hearts, the urbanity of their manners seem to lead us back to the times when nature was supreme.

To hosts such as these you will easily judge, Sir, there is no difficulty in accommodating oneself. What a country is that in which things ridiculous inspire more compassion than laughter. Would you have an example of this read what follows:— Not far from me lives a certain original, a Savoyard-Officer, fat and clumsy, but obliging to excess, and, if the truth be spoken, it would be difficult to determine whether he has a larger stock of goodness or of folly. His mania is to introduce all strangers in the town wherever their business or their wishes lead them. To gratify this fancy, he places himself every morning upon the bridge, to watch the arrival of all new-comers, while a party of his soldiers are employed to watch at the other gate. When any one arrives, be he gentle or simple, honest man or knave, he carries him with the utmost ceremony to the best inn, where he regales him, and then without making any enquiries who or what he is, introduces him to the principal persons of the place. He is so noted for this fancy that one day, in the fields, he was accosted by a person who said he came from Tripoly, that his name was Pignatelli, and that he was a marquis and count. Without any enquiry our Savoyard proposes introducing him to M. de Voltaire, and taking him into his carriage, away they drove to the philosopher's, the cicerone assuring his *protégé* by the way that M. de Voltaire would be extremely happy to see him. But such was the mien, such the wretched aspect of this poor creature,

above all such was the dialect and manner in which his salutations were made, that the philosopher, indignant, turned his back upon him. Our introducer in vain bustled about, running over, till he was quite out of breath, the names, titles, and a long *et cætera* of this supposed Count; " It is " all mighty well," says the young Sophy, " but if " this booby really comes from Egmont, he must at " least have been the head-cook of the Chateau.". In short, not to protract my history too much, our famous Count after a few days stay at Geneva took himself away without a word said to any body, leaving the introducer to pay his reckoning. Some time elapsed, but nothing more was heard of him, yet our Savoyard could not get him out of his head, and often enquired news concerning him, of strangers that came to the town, when at length he heard that the poor Count had been hanged as a malefactor. In France what mirth would not this story have occasioned, how would the poor protector have been turned into ridicule.—Well, here his fellow-citizens pitied and did all they could to console him, wishing that with a heart so generous, he might in future be more fortunate in his judgment. As scarcely any thing has been talked about, at Geneva, for some days but this history, I have thought that nothing could be more a-propos, to give you a just-idea of the Genevese *bonhommie*. This is the general stile of their character, with the exception of some eight or ten persons who begin to be corrupted;—and I know not by what fatality, these are the very persons

whom I have selected as my principal associates; the reason I leave you to find out if you can. You see Sir, by the medley I address to you, that absence and long silence have not diminished our friendship, at least on my side, and I will flatter myself not on yours. In my turn I shall expect you to render up to me a faithful account of the reasons of your silence, and then exchanging forgiveness, let us promise reciprocally, and for the twentieth time greater punctuality on both sides.

January, 1759.

LETTER *from the King of* PRUSSIA *to Marshal Count* SAXE.

Charlottenbourg, November 3rd. 1746.

"The letter you gave me the pleasure of addressing to me was extremely acceptable; it may serve as an admirable code of instruction for every man who undertakes the command of an army. You give precepts which you illustrate by examples, and I can assure you that I was not the last to applaud your manœuvres. In the first ebullitions of youth when we follow nothing but the vivacity of an imagination not yet regulated by experience, every thing is sacrificed to brilliant actions, to extraordinary things which may dazzle. At the age of twenty Boileau esteemed the writings of Voltaire, at thirty he preferred Horace.

" In the first years that I undertook the command of my troops, I was altogether for points; but numerous events to which I was a witness, and in which indeed I bore a part, undeceived me. It was from the adoption of this principle that my campaign of 1744 failed entirely; and it was from having ill secured the position of their quarters that the French and Spaniards were at length compelled to abandon Italy. I followed step by step your campaign in Flanders, and without having so much presumption as to rely entirely on my own judgment, I believe that the severest censor could not find a fault. The great art of war is to foresee all events, and the great art of the general is to have prepared all his resources beforehand, that he may not be embarrassed what part to take when the decisive moment is arrived. The better the troops are, the better they are disciplined, the less art is required to command them, and as the glory is acquired by surmounting difficulties, it is certain that he, who has the greatest portion of difficulties to encounter, ought always to obtain the largest share of honour. A Hannibal may always be made of a Fabius; but I do not think that a Hannibal world ever be capable of pursuing the conduct of a Fabius.

" I congratulate you with all my heart upon the fine campaign you have just concluded. I do not doubt that the successes of the next will be worthy of the two preceding ones. You prepare events with too much prudence to doubt of

your successes. The chapter of events is vast, but foresight and address may correct fortune. I am, with much esteem your affectionate friend."

Signed FREDERICK.

Although this letter be not new I thought you would not be sorry to add it to the collection you already have from the same illustrious hand.

February, 1759.

Numerous pamphlets have already appeared against M. Rousseau's work, and it is probable that many more are yet to come; for the inutility of the thing cannot restrain any one who is strongly infected with the *cacœthes scribendi*. M. Marmontel has defended the cause of plays most diffusely in the *French Mercury*, and the Marquis de Ximenès has addressed a letter to the *Citizen* upon the moral effect of theatrical entertaiments. It is said besides that a player at Lyons is about to take up the question, added to which a letter has been handed about in manuscript as from *Harlequin*; this letter is in my opinion infamous, because it is much more a personal attack upon the manners and morals of M. Rousseau himself than a discussion of the principles which he has put forth. In short, here is a quarrel stirred which will prove a fertile source of *ennui* to us for a year, perhaps, to come. All the answerers of M. Rousseau allow that he is in the right as far as the town of Geneva alone is concerned, and only combat what he has said against the theatre in general. For my part,

it has, I own, appeared to me very ridiculous to see M. d'Alembert and M. Rousseau debating at Paris, and troubling the public there, with what is, or is not expedient for the town of Geneva, as if they had been elected by the republic for that purpose; or as if it was of great importance to France, nay to Europe, or even to the world at large, to discuss a point which does not concern them in the least, and should be left entirely to the magistrates and people of Geneva to settle as they think best.

In fact, if M. d'Alembert's article has been thought very ridiculous at Paris, M. Rousseau's book has not been thought less so at Geneva. The sensible part of the Genevese say: "With what "reason does this writer think himself qualified to "expatiate upon the interior concerns of our "town. He quitted it at a very early age, he "received a wholly foreign education, and passed "forty years of his life a total stranger to it. "Never has he lived there; in the course of his "life he has visited the place two or three times, "but never to stay more than a month or six "weeks, and then he was only among persons in "very obscure situations. Suppose a man born at "Constantinople, but who had quitted it at five or "six years of age, would he be considered as very "well qualified to give an account of the manners "and customs of the Turks?—M. Rousseau is "unacquainted with our laws, our customs, our "genius, the sources of our prosperity or of our "ills, the spirit of our government of the magis-

" tracy, and of the people. Yet devoid of all " ideas upon these subjects, he presumes to set " himself up as the arbiter of our concerns. He " pleads for us, he prescribes laws to us, he regu- " lates our occupations whether public, civil, or " domestic, as if the republic had appointed him " to the office, he would even consider his silence " on the occasion as criminal. So much zeal is " gratuitous, and very extraordinary."

They who speak thus are in the right. All persons who know any thing of Geneva will immediately feel that M. Rousseau has not painted the manners of the town such as they are, but such as he has pictured them in his imagination. Nothing can bear less resemblance to the reality than the character ascribed by the *Citizen of Geneva* to his countrymen, nothing can be more unlike than the spirit which he represents as reigning in the government, nothing more ridiculous than what he says of the women, of the state of society, and of the amusements of the place. The dance about the fountain of St. Gervais, the description of which has been so much admired at Paris, is regarded at Geneva as a masterpiece of nonsense. Love of systems and paradoxes creates prepossessions very much in opposition to true philosophy; every kind of contrivance that can be made use of to assist in supporting them is resorted to; the utmost advantage is taken of all phœnomena that are favorable to them, and every thing unfavorable is made to keep an awful

distance; every thing is explained in such a manner as will best accommodate it to the purpose. M. Rousseau has arranged in his head a picture of the town of Geneva, not such as it is, but as he would have it, in order to proscribe playhouses;—in like manner as his imagination formerly created a history of animals, and men in savage life, favourable to his ideas of the dangers of society; while, from gorging himself with his systems, he finishes at last by receiving very seriously, as facts, things that originated only in his own creative fancy. Without knowing much of the town of Geneva one's-self, it is easy, with a little philosophy and reflection, to see that the manners M. Rousseau ascribes to his countrymen cannot be their real ones. If the inhabitants of Geneva lived, like those of some of the interior cantons of Switzerland, remote from all connection with the rest of the world, from all intercourse with foreign nations, occupied solely with the cultivation of their soil, ignorant of all other trades but those of a labourer and a soldier, I should readily believe what the Citizen tells us of the simplicity of their manners, and should be disposed to subscribe to his opinion, that it ought to be maintained with the utmost care, that it would be doing them great injury to attempt polishing them. When I know that at Zug, at Uri, at Unterwald, the first magistrate is an old man, superior only to the others in understanding, but, like the rest, cultivating his fields, who administers justice seated upon a stone

under the shade of a spreading oak, I have no difficulty in believing such a people to be among the happiest upon the globe, and can readily allow that they do not want theatres, or the arts, or to have any cares bestowed in furnishing them with amusements. But Geneva is very far from being a place of this description; its inhabitants not having, properly speaking, any territory of their own, have no choice given them between being mere cultivators of the soil, a mode of life which at once renders the manners simple and mild and preserves them so, and following those other occupations which always corrupt the manners more or less. They are obliged to have recourse to commerce and the arts, and in consequence wealth accumulates among them, with all the ills that it brings in its train. How, amid the pursuits of interest, and the love of gain, by which they are constantly agitated, can they have preserved that purity and simplicity of manners ascribed to them by M. Rousseau. The Genevese are the greatest of all vagabonds; there is not a corner in this part of the globe where they are not to be found: what numbers pass the greatest part of their lives at Paris and at London. How can a people, thus addicted to rambling, who so readily quit their country, have that ardent love for it, that uniformity in their manners, without which it is impossible for their simplicity to be preserved? To this may be added, that Geneva has been the asylum of great numbers of French and Italian

Protestants, and that there are not perhaps in the whole town twenty purely Swiss families. The Genevese have often been considered as persons of talents, and as having a great readiness in acquiring arts, or practising commerce, but they never were celebrated for the virtues imputed to them by M. Rousseau. Nay, not to mention that good faith is by no means considered as their peculiar characteristic, they were never commended among their neighbours for their cordiality, and for the simplicity of their manners.

April, 1759.

A decree has been issued by his Majesty's Council of State, dated the eighth of March, revoking the letters of privilege granted to the Encyclopædia. Thus is the grandest and most important undertakiug that ever was set on foot in literature stopped in the midst of its progress, and the confidence of the public in every species of subscription annihilated. The booksellers engaged in the work cry out that their credit is ruined, but the public has much more cause to complain. It is demonstrable that every subscriber has paid no less than a hundred and forty livres in advance upon the ensuing volumes, besides that those, which have come out, are rendered of almost no value by the want of the plates. M. Diderot had prepared materials for more than three thousand plates; and it was by this treasure that the Encyclopædia, notwithstanding the faults inseparable from such an

undertaking, would have been invaluable. These plates were to form three separate volumes, and the authors proposed publishing them at the end of the work, with explanations to each plate, which M. Diderot had engaged to furnish;—the designs were made under his own inspection, and no common pains had been bestowed upon them. For fifteen years has the philosopher been occupied with this important work; fifteen years hence, when all hatreds, envyings, and jealousies, shall have disappeared, when the spirit of party and sectarianism shall be gone by, those who, from weakness, have yielded to these sinister impressions will blush at the share they have taken in crushing an enterprize so honourable to their nation and their age. For some time terrible outcries have been raised against the Encyclopædia. Jansenists, Molinists, all parties have united to crush it; even men of letters, who were not concerned in the work, have omitted no opportunity of decrying it. It certainly were much to be wished that some of the Encyclopædists had exercised a little more discretion; and not, by attacking prejudices of every description with too little management, have given so much occasion for clamour. It would certainly be far better if men were perfect, and never permitted themselves to deviate in any point from the exact measure of what is right, but such men are still to be born. I know not how the public will reconcile themselves to being debarred of what they must consider as their positive

right; I know not how the worshipful corporation of booksellers will ever be able to console themselves for the loss of some thousand subscriptions; but the authors concerned in compiling the work will at least be great gainers. The profit they derived from it was very small; M. Diderot, for example, will gain by this suppression, in the first place, peace and quiet; and, in the next, time to occupy himself in such other works as the fecundity of his genius may suggest to him, and from which he will acquire far more reputation and profit.

November, 1759.

The works of Mr. Hume increase in reputation in France in proportion as they become more known from being more translated; by the expiration of another year we shall probably have a complete edition of them. A translation of the *History of Natural Religion* has just been published in Holland, as well as of *Three Dissertations*, one upon the passions, another upon tragedy, and the third upon taste. I know not whether these are by the same person who, about a year ago, published a translation of the *Philosophical Essays* of Mr. Hume, but it appears to me that much greater pains were taken with the Essays than have been bestowed upon this new work. The Abbé Prevost promises us a translation of Mr. Hume's *History of the four last Sovereigns of the House of Stuart*: this work, which has a very great reputation in

England, will most certainly obtain an equal one in France, if the translator will take the trouble of giving all the grandeur and elevation he is so capable of giving to his style.

Before I enter upon a discussion of the new collection which has just appeared, I must advert to an idea of Mr. Hume's, which I have long entertained myself, and which I was delighted to find in the works of so enlightened a philosopher. "The "difference of sentiments," says he, "which we "find between the antients and the moderns, with "regard to the study of letters, is very remarkable. "Among the Roman emperors, reckoning from "Cæsar to Severus, more than the half were au- "thors; and, not to mention Germanicus and "Agrippina his daughter, who were so nearly con- "nected with the throne, the greater part of the "classical writers, whose works have been pre- "served to us, were men of distinction by birth "and rank. As all human advantages are attended "with some inconveniences, we may ascribe the "revolution which has taken place among man- "kind in this respect to the invention of printing. "This has rendered books so common, that men "even of the most moderate fortunes can procure "them."—I know not whether the facility of procuring books, as Mr. Hume thinks, or rather the facility of publishing them, as I am inclined to be of opinion, may have most degraded the trade of an author; but it is certain that, under this point of view, the art of printing has done much injury

to letters. The most ordinary minds having found the means of publishing their absurdities and impertinences to the world, and of rendering them the means of profit to themselves, it has followed as a necessary consequence that authorship has become a profession; and many persons now depending upon this trade for a subsistence, such an abuse of the privilege of writing will of course be perpetuated. Genius and taste must be alike sufferers from so great a multiplication of bad productions of every kind; for it is impossible to expect that the fruit of a good tree, standing amidst fifty degenerate ones which bear nothing but execrable fruits, should preserve its primitive beauty and excellence; we always take, more or less, the tone from those by whom we are surrounded. Perhaps it is in the invention of printing that we are to seek the cause of that very great difference which persons of an exquisite and delicate taste can never fail to perceive between the antients and the moderns. Among the Greeks and Romans study was the relaxation of the noblest and most elevated minds; a man of obscure condition could not acquire reputation in letters but by the display of a very extraordinary genius. Among us the career of letters has become that of all the most useless among the species; no writer is so contemptible but that he may hope to see his name in print; nay, and even much more frequently than the names of M. de Montesquieu and M. de Voltaire. There are parts of the world in which the Cheva-

lier de Mouhy passes for a charming writer, and where no one would dare to pronounce an opinion upon a work contrary to what has been pronounced by the Abbé de la Porte or M. Freron. Reading is become with us a regular occupation; persons of the highest distinction and the most refined education devote a considerable part of their leisure to it; and there is no one who has not to regret, more or less, the time they have employed in reading bad works. But if we had never had any but good books to read, nothing is more contrary to genius than to read by habit. Genius wishes to remain collected and concentrated within itself; the ideas of others scatter and blunt its own, take away from their originality, or, if I may use the expression, from their virginity. A superior mind wants food, but it wants only a little; he must read, but it must be with extreme temperance; and I will venture to lay it down as an incontrovertible truth, that the greatest genius cannot have read habitually for three years together, without becoming a common and ordinary writer. It is for this reason that we have so very few original writers. The antients, reading but little, after having studied during their youth in the schools, could not fail of producing works of genius when by chance they felt themselves tormented by the demon of writing,—by the desire of creating.

Taste has not suffered less by the multiplication of books. The consequence of authorship becoming a profession is, that authors have found

it necessary to seek out patrons, to study the reigning whim, and practise other tricks of trade, so that book-making has become a sort of mechanical art, like that of manufacturing linen or woollen cloth. This is what our scribblers qualify by the title of method, and which, according to their assertions, gives us so great a superiority over the antients. Poor simpletons that we are, thus to mistake the trivial art of putting a scaffolding together, for the power of building a beautiful edifice. We do not find in our methodical books either warmth, character, extent of views, or genius; instead of them the spirit of division, of discussion, abounds in a degree to excite the perfection of *ennui*. Nay, let a work of real genius by chance appear, instantly the whole tribe of methodizers fall upon it, pathetically lamenting its deficiency in method. Incapable of accompanying a superior mind in its flight, in the proud soaring of its ideas, they consider as disorder every thing which they cannot reduce to their dull and petty standard. The necessity of writing for the public, that is, for all sorts of readers, renders our works vague and insipid, by confining us to nothing but commonplace remarks and ideas. The antients, writing for a small number of persons, addressing their works commonly to a friend, to one man alone, gave them by that means the turn of originality, and the taste which spreads such a charm over all their writings.

May, 1760.

According to M. de Voltaire, the speeches made by new members, on being received into the French Academy, consist ordinarily of four or five essential propositions. Imprimis, that the Cardinal de Richelieu was a great man; secondly, that the Chancellor Seguier was a great man; thirdly, that Louis the Fourteenth was also a great man; fourthly, that the Academician whom he succeeds was more especially a very great man; and that the President, the Secretary and all the Members are great men; which leads him to hope, fifthly, that he himself, being admitted among them, may also have some chance of being considered as a great man. From all these ingredients, of great men, is commonly compiled one of the most flat and insipid speeches ever put forth in the kingdom of the Gauls; where, however, there is no inconsiderable crop of flat ones.

M. le Franc de Pompignan, in taking his seat at the Academy, thought he would diverge, in some respects, at least, from this common routine. He in the first place insinuates to us pretty plainly, that he, our new member, is a very great man; he afterwards allows that M. de Maupertuis, whom he succeeds, was a sort of a great man; and allows nearly as much of Cardinal Richelieu, the Chancellor Seguier, and Louis the Fourteenth. But here his eulogiums stop, and he runs off into a violent invective against the philosophers and literati of the present day; so that, to sum up all,

Richelieu, Seguier, Maupertuis, and Louis the Fourteenth, being dead, there remains, properly speaking, no great man in France, except M. le Franc de Pompignan; Messieurs de Voltaire, de Buffon, d'Alembert and Diderot are fit only to be thrown to the dogs. This speech has not been received with indifference by the public. It is found somewhat singular that the only great man of whom France could boast should come from the farther end of Gascony to the capital, in order to teach us that no one can be a great man but inasmuch as he goes to mass and tells over his beads, and that M. de Maupertuis was only a great man because he died in the hands of priests. It has appeared somewhat extraordinary that a man should begin his career at the Academy by a satire against the literati of the country, and impute to us the being misled by false literature and a false philosophy. This is, in plainer terms, to say that our philosophy is become false and dangerous since it has resembled that of Greece in the time of Socrates and Plato, of Rome in the days of Lælius and Cicero, of England in the times of Newton, Locke, and Pope. I know not whether the setting off of M. le Franc de Pompignan be that of a *great* man, but I am very sure it is not that of a *wise* one. It was easy to see that, even supposing the philosophers to be remiss in going to mass and to confession, that does not at all preclude them from being able to wield the pen with effect, and that they might very possibly be tempted to employ it

against a *great man* who insulted them gratuitously. He ought farther to have considered that in placing the philosophers, from an excess of generosity, in such a situation that they could not defend themselves seriously against his imputations, without becoming odious to fools and to the populace, he invited them to have recourse to ridicule; and if by chance the aggressor had put forth this effusion in the hope of recommending himself as sub-governor to the children of France, nothing would stand more in his way than to have been the mark at which a thousand bitter satires were aimed. These reflections did not present themselves to M. Le Franc or at least not till too late. A certain M. Clodoré, whose pen resembles not a little that of M. de Voltaire, has written a number of *Althoughs, or useful Notes upon the speech of a new Academician*, to which an anonymous pen, not very inferior to that of M. d'Alembert, has added *Ifs* and *Whys*. In these the claims of M. le Franc to be a great man are enquired into, and it is found that his tragedy of *Dido* is not a *chef-d'œuvre*, although he levied contributions for it upon Metastasio and Virgil, travestying these two authors in very cold and insipid verses. It has farther been discovered that all the other works of M. le Franc are absolutely not readable, and will acquire him but a very humble place among men of letters; no one has done him the injustice to give him even a humble place among the philosophers. In short, by a revolution extraordinary

enough, it happens that M. le Franc after being considered for forty years, upon his own word, as a man fully qualified to be a member of the French Academy, no sooner has become one than his title to eligibility is disputed; so true is it that persons too much penetrated with their own merit, do not attract equal admiration from others. You will readily believe that this contest has already given birth to pamphlets of all kinds. M. le Franc judged proper to answer the *Although* in a memorial addressed to the King. M. Clodoré and all the authors of *Ifs* and *Whys* could not have circulated any thing more severe against him than this absurd and ridiculous apology; it has certainly not brought the laughers over to his side.

June, 1760.

You will expect, without doubt, that I should notice the celebrated comedy of *The Philosophers*, with which the public has been so much occupied for six weeks past. Nothing can better paint the character of our nation that what is now passing under our eyes. That we experienced some ill-strokes of fortune is notorious to all Europe. What would be the astonishment of a stranger who arriving at Paris, in such a moment, should find it occupied with nothing but Ramponeau, Pompignan, and Palissot. Such is however the case, and if the news of a battle gained had arrived on the day when *The Philosophers* was first brought out, it would have been a battle lost to the glory

of M. de Broglio, for nobody would have talked of it. The triumvirs of the nation have happily made us forget that we are involved in any calamities. Ramponeau, the tavern-keeper of La Courtille, is become one of the most celebrated personages in France, an object of attention and conversation both to the court and to the city; and that only for having sold his wine cheaper than his brethren, for having given away liquor among all the lackeys of Paris. Master Le Franc de Pompignan, for having delivered a dull and impertinent speech at the French Academy, and for having been lashed for it in a delightful variety of ways, now shares M. Ramponeau's celebrity; while Palissot, who was hitherto only a composer of obscure libels, is associated in fame with the other two, for writing the immortal comedy of *The Philosophers*. When this piece is read, at the distance of fifty leagues from Paris, people must be much astonished at the noise it has made. There is neither plan in it, nor intrigue, nor conduct, nor character, nor wit, nor humour, nor strength, nor lightness, none of the qualities, in short, which are usually numbered among the requisites in a dramatic composition. We find nothing but a miserable imitation of the situations in *Le Mechant* and *Les Femmes savantes*. Not a scene which displays any talent except for malignity, or any sentiment except a desire to injure. The only dramatic situation in the piece, that where the valet robs his master in consequence of his

system of morality, is taken from *Timon the Manhater*. The whole wit and point of the comedy consists in bringing out, for ever, that *philosopher* and *rogue* are synonymous terms.—in attacking M. Diderot, M. Helvetius, and otherpersons, and bringing them forwards as rascals, as men without principle,—and in making Jean Jacques go on all-fours.

However wretched this piece may be in itself, it will be ever memorable, as marking an epoch in the history of France, and will prove the justness of the observation, that the most extraordinary events often hang upon the most trivial and contemptible causes. It is in reality a matter of great indifference that Palissot should have written a wretched comedy, levelled against men irreproachable in their moral conduct and deserving of the highest respect for their industry and talents; but that this farce should have been acted on the same theatre with the works of the great Corneille, under the authority of the government; that the police, which in this country pursues with such severity all satirical works, should have deviated from its principles and permitted men of the above description to be publicly insulted by a most atrocious satire,—this is not a matter of indifference. Besides showing an inversion of all justice and good order, it evinces what kind of favour learning and philosophy have to expect, henceforward, on the part of the government. It is easy to foresee the result. Philosophy has no sooner

begun to enlighten us, than folly and superstition have risen up on every side, conspiring to destroy her, employing for the purpose, all those malignant artifices, which are so well known and so decried, yet which are always certain in their effect. The grossest falsehoods, the most atrocious calumnies, the most unjust persecutions, have been employed so resist the progress of reason and truth; things have been carried to such a pitch that there is not a man in place who does not, at this moment, consider the diffusion of philosophy as the source of all those misfortunes which have afflicted us in these latter years. One should have thought that the causes which occasioned our losing the battles of Minden and of Rosbach, which brought about the destruction of our fleets were sufficiently obvious and glaring. But if you consult the spirit of the court, you will be told that these disasters are to be attributed to the new philosophy; that this spirit has extinguished the military spirit, has destroyed that blind submission and all the other qualities which formerly combined to produce great men and glorious actions, in France. In vain will it be observed to them that when the laws are duly enforced, when justice presides in the choice of those who are to administer the affairs of the country, when mediocrity of talents and intrigue do not obtain the honours due only to superior talents and superior virtue, then the spirit of the nation, the taste for glory and great actions, will be preserved and perpetuated from age to age;—in vain

would it be observed to them, that for above a century past the English people have been more enlightened than we shall ever be; that though they have had their Hobbes, their Collins, their Locke, and have now their Hume and their Johnson, this has not prevented their infantry standing, at the battle of Minden, against all the efforts of the best cavalry of France, and obtaining a memorable victory;—in vain, I say, would all these things be represented to them; the prejudice against philosophy is too well established ever to yield to observations founded in common sense, it would still produce its usual effects. The light which had begun to spread will soon be wholly extinguished; barbarism and superstition will recover all their influence; two or three men of genius, who still remain, will soon be silenced or banished the country, and the time does not seem far distant when it will be thought a blessing to France that she is deprived of them.

Within a short time we have had printed here the *Panegyric of Matthew Reinhard, a master shoemaker*. It is a piece of humour, written last year, by the King of Prussia, in his camp, at Landshut. You will find some things rather tedious, many things highly amusing. In general, this is not the species of writing in which the Philosopher of Sans-Souci particularly excels. This monarch, in the midst of all his military toils, has addressed an epistle in verse to M. d'Alembert, upon the sup-

pression of the Encyclopædia; it is full of strength and fire. M. Joly de Fleury with his requisition of last year, the Jesuits with their hypocrisy and dirty transactions in Portugal, the fools with their obscurities and their high pretensions, are not spared. I wish I could have sent you a copy, but hitherto M. d'Alembert has not thought proper to let any of his friends have one.

The poem of *The Seasons*, by Thomson, has been translated this winter; the edition, made of it, is ornamented with plates and vignettes, and is at least handsome to the eye. Madame Bontemps is the person by whom it is translated, but the work is not very highly esteemed. The fault of this poem seems to consist in too great a profusion of imagery; in being, if I may say so, too poetical. From being over rich and flowery, it becomes fatiguing and monotonous; the same fault may be found with *The Pleasures of Imagination.* The world have hardly given themselves the trouble of passing any judgment upon Madame Bontemps' share of the work—the translation.

Mr. Hume, in his *Dissertation upon the Rules of Taste*, draws a sort of parallel between Homer and M. de Fenelon, on which I must make a few observations. "When Homer," says he, "lays "down general principles, every body assents to "their truth. The case is not the same when he "paints personal manners. There is in the courage

" of Achilles, a ferocity; in the prudence of Ulysses, " a duplicity, which Fenelon would certainly never " have given to those heroes. The sage Ulysses, of " the Greek poet, is a liar by profession and inclina- " tion; instead of which, in the French poem, his " son carries his scruples so far as to run the " greatest dangers rather than deviate from the " most rigid truth." Let us observe, in the first place, that, as to general precepts, all poets, all legislators, all founders of religions, inculcate the same moral system. Virtue is always praised, vice is always condemned; and it is a very trifling merit, as Mr. Hume himself says, to lay down general maxims upon the science of morals. Thus, when we do not hear any thing better said, of a dramatic piece, than that it is the work of an honest man, we may safely add, of a man of very moderate talents. Nothing is in fact more easy than to put maxims into verse, and to tell us that we ought to be humane, generous, compassionate. Of all the poetic rules none appears so idle as to tell the poet that he ought always to have a moral end in view; as if, universal reason being such as it is, a poet could be at liberty to have any other view; that he could be allowed, for instance, to render virtue odious. There is this difference between the heroes of the *Iliad* and those of *Telemachus*, that the former are sketched after human nature, the latter upon the general principles of morals; they must be consequently cold, destitute of vigour, of colouring, and of truth. The poet assumes as a moral

maxim, that we ought never to lie, not even when it may be for our temporary interest to disguise the truth. Instead of simply preaching this maxim, he endeavours to put it into action. He shows us the young Telemachus in a situation to procure himself a temporary good by a falshood, when the truth could not be told without manifest danger; the young man prefers the danger of truth to the advantages of falshood, in order to lead us to the conclusion that there is no occasion whatever on which we ought not to abhor falsehood. Such a work is undoubtedly that of an honest man; it may be replete with useful truths; it may be written with grandeur and elegance; but it will never be a production of genius. A single stroke of the pencil of Homer will be more seductive to a man of taste than the whole fiction of Fenelon. Telemachus may be excellent, for the amusement and instruction of children, but the Iliad will be the admiration of all ages. It is with poets as with painters; a man of moderate talents will paint a hundred pictures, inculcating some very fine maxim; no genius is requisite for this; but I should call him indeed a painter of genius, who, in the sacrifice of Iphigenia, should paint Ulysses, pretending, through compassion for the unfortunate Agamemnon, to keep from his view, by the attitude in which he places himself, the horrible spectacle that is passing, but in reality wishing to conceal it, lest nature, at this dreadful moment, more powerful than every other consideration, should prompt him

irresistibly to prevent a sacrifice believed necessary for the salvation of Greece. No moral maxim would result from this duplicity in Ulysses, but the painter would have displayed a stroke of true genius, he would have done a thing truly sublime. In general, forcible manners are requisite for painting and poetry, but they must be simple as well as energetic. We may perhaps be authorized in saying, that the more a people are polished, the less poetical and picturesque they become. Mr. Hume is in an error when he says that a representation pleases us in proportion as the characters resemble those we see in our own country, and that some efforts are required to reconcile us to the simplicity of ancient manners. On the contrary, it seems to me, that this simplicity has an indescribable charm to a man of taste; instead of which our manners, destitute of truth and strength, can only be insipid in imitation. With what effect can a people be represented in poetry or in painting whose dress is ridiculous, whose principles have almost all some tincture of their Gothic origin, among whom we no longer remark any sensible distinction of age or manners, and where we see nothing like the appearance of any thing affecting even among the nearest relations. Let me add, that it would be a great folly, and loss to the arts, to carry into them that false delicacy which reigns in our principles and in our conduct. He among us who should revenge himself on his enemy, by assassination, is for ever dishonoured; he must put

arms into his hands, and challenge him to the fight. But the young Corsican, whom his mother trains up in sentiments of vengeance, by showing him every day the mantle dyed with his father's blood, and naming the fatal enemy of their family,—this haughty islander, who no sooner arrives at manhood than he conceals himself behind a bush to attack the murderer of his father by surprize, and defenceless,—can he be considered as a stranger to the principles of true honour?—By pursuing a train of such reflections we easily perceive that Mr. Hume does not speak as a man of taste, not even as a philosopher, when he attacks the tragedies of *Polyeuctes* and *Athalia*, and advances that the bigotry with which the Roman Catholic religion inspires its followers, and which is so prominent a feature in these pieces, disfigures them extremely. Tolerance is undoubtedly one of the first of human virtues; but if the High-priest in the tragedy of Athalia were not intolerant, and if Polyeuctes were not fanatical, these two pieces would certainly not be *chefs-d'œuvre*. It is the same case with the vicious qualities which the Scotch philosopher reproves in the heroes of Homer.

LETTER *from* JEAN JAQUES ROUSSEAU *to M.* PALLISSOT, *returning him the Comedy of* The Philosophers.

Montmorency, May 21, 1760.

In running over the piece which you sent me, Sir, I shuddered when I found myself praised. I

cannot accept this horrible present. I am persuaded that you did not mean to affront me; but you are ignorant, undoubtedly, or you have forgotten, that I have the honour to be the intimate friend of M. Diderot, of that respectable man whom you have so cruelly calumniated in this infamous libel.

M. de Saint Foix, who is accused by the authors of the *Christian Journal* with having endeavoured, in his *Essays on Paris*, to turn religion into ridicule, and with having scattered a great many impieties over his work, has taken a very decided part. He has presented a request to the Lieutenant of the Criminal Court, as the first step in commencing a criminal prosecution against the authors of this calumny. They were extremely alarmed at a measure so unexpected, and immediately made all possible apology and reparation for what they had said;—the affair has therefore been compromised. It would have been matter of great curiosity to see what sort of a sentence the court would have pronounced upon a species of calumny so very much in vogue in these days. M. de Saint Foix is a man who is in general very much praised and flattered by our journalists, because he has declared that he will cut off the ears of any one who attacks him, and these gentry have no doubt that he would adhere strictly to his words.

COPY *of a* LETTER *written with the King of* PRUSSIA'*s own hand to the Marquis* D'ARGENS, *dated Horensdorff, near Breslaw, August* 27, 1760.

In former times, my dear Marquis, the affair of the fifteenth would have decided the campaign; at present this affair is but a scratch; we must have a battle before my fate can be determined. This, according to all appearance, we shall have soon; and if the event should be favourable, then we may indeed rejoice. In the mean time, I return you my sincere thanks for the interest you take in our fate. We have been obliged to practise many stratagems, and a great deal of address, to bring things to this point. Do not talk to me of dangers; our last action cost me only a coat and a horse; this is purchasing victory at an easy rate. I have not received the other letter you mention. We are, as it were, blockaded with respect to our correspondence, by the Russians on the side of the Oder, and by the Austrians on the other side. We were obliged to have a little skirmish to make a passage for Cocceji; I hope he will remit you my letter.

Never in my life was I in a more distressing situation than in this campaign. There must be something almost miraculous to make us support all the difficulties which I foresee. I shall certainly do my duty upon the occasion; but remember always, my dear Marquis, that fortune is not at my command, that I am obliged to admit too

much of chance into my plans, for want of the means of doing otherwise. I have the labours of Hercules on my hands, at an age when my strength begins to fail, and my infirmities increase; when, to say the truth, hope, the only consolation of the unfortunate, begins to forsake me. You are not sufficiently acquainted with things to form a just idea of the dangers that menace the state. I know them, I conceal them, I keep my apprehensions to myself, and communicate nothing to the public but the hopes and the little good news that I can give them. If the stroke I meditate should succeed, then, my dear Marquis, will be the time for our hearts to expand with joy; but till we see the event of this let us not flatter ourselves, lest by unexpected ill-fortune we should be too much cast down.

I lead here the life of a military Chartreux. I have much to think of in the great pressure of business, the rest of my time I devote to letters, which are my only consolation, as they were to the orator Consul, the father of eloquence and of his country. I know not whether I shall survive this war; but I am resolved, if I should, to pass the rest of my days in the bosom of friendship and philosophy. As soon as the communication shall be more free, you will do me great pleasure in writing to me often. I know not where we shall take up our winter quarters. My house at Breslau has been destroyed by the bombardment of the town. Our enemies grudge us the light of

day, and the air we breathe; some place, however, they must leave us, and if it be secure I cannot help having a hope of seeing you there.

And what, my dear Marquis, will become of the peace of France?—You see that your nation is more blinded than you believed it. These madmen will lose Canada and Pondicherry to please the Queen of Hungary and the Czarina. Heaven grant that Prince Ferdinand may pay their zeal well!—It will be the officers, and the poor soldiers, who are innocent of these ills, that will be the victims of it, while the illustrious guilty will escape entirely unhurt. I know an anecdote of the Duke de ———, which I will impart when I see you. Never did a more mad and inconsiderate proceeding blast the character of a minister of France, since ministers have existed. But I am interrupted by business. I was in a disposition to write; but I must conclude, at the same time to release you, and not to be wanting in my duty. Adieu! my dear Marquis;—I embrace you with all my heart.

FREDERIC.

November, 1760.

The History of the Empire of Russia under Peter the Great, by M. de Voltaire, the first part of which is just published, has not met with so distinguished a reception as the importance of the subject and the high reputation of the author gave just reason to expect. People are, in the first

place, disappointed at having only half the history; they looked for a complete work. The part which has been the most attacked is the preface; it is thought puerile, and in a bad taste, written in a strain too much bordering on the facetious; it would not even make a figure, people say, in a literary miscellany. I freely own that I am not so much shocked at it as the public in general; I even think that the part which attacks the system of the Chinese being the descendants of an Egyptian colony contains much able and excellent criticism. It was not the fault of our journalists, last year, when the reveries of M. de Guignes and the Abbé Barthelemy were put into circulation, if they were not thought to have made the most important discoveries the age had produced. These gentlemen decided upon the origin of a people, respecting whom we have very little information that can be relied on, with a certainty which could scarcely have been applied with propriety to very recent events in our own history. The fools exclaimed as if a miracle had been performed, and every body knows of what importance their exclamations are in the world. However, that formidable antagonist of folly who lives on the borders of the lake of Geneva, with a few pages of ridicule, has overthrown all their nonsensical and laborious edifice of conjectures, and made its absurdity manifest even to those who are the least clear-sighted. Fools do not love to have such incursions made upon them, and this is the reason why they cry

out so loudly against M. de Voltaire. They reproach him with his jokes being in a very bad taste, but unfortunately these jokes have become the currency of the day, and people capable of reasoning are forced to allow that M. de Guignes proves the descent of the Chinese from the Egyptians by arguments absolutely similar to those which M. de Voltaire employs to demonstrate that the French descend originally from the Greeks, or, if the nation had rather it should be so, from the Trojans. I shall not defend equally the remainder of this preface, though it is less attacked.

It has long been a reproach made to M. de Voltaire that his preliminary discourses are only composed as justifications of the works which they precede, and that he does not seek to establish any principles but such as have some relation to the system he has adopted, and which he is interested to defend; consequently that, if these same preliminary discourses were printed all together and read one after the other in a regular series, we should have the prettiest assemblage of contradictions that could be collected. For this time M. de Voltaire establishes it as a rule, that we ought not to write the private lives of great men, which means to say that he does not intend to favour the public with the private life of the Czar. "It "is not," says he, "for a foreigner to unveil the "secrets of his closet, of his private life, and of "his table."—If M. de Voltaire's ideas on this subject be the correct ones, then will my dear old

Plutarch be good for nothing but to be thrown into the fire. The public life of a man teaches me to know his public character, it is his domestic life that teaches me to know the man. One day, in a hot summer, Marshal Turenne was leaning out at the window with only his waistcoat on. A servant, who passed through the room, mistaking him for a fellow-servant, came softly up to him and gave him a heavy slap behind. The Marshal turned round, when the servant, terrified, threw himself on his knees, entreating his forgiveness, and assuring him that he thought it had been James. "And if it had been James," said the Marshal, calmly, "there was no occasion to strike so hard."—What do we learn from such a reply?—Why that this great man was no less calm and composed in his house than at the head of his army. Every one knows the history of his hat, thrown into the pit by a man who, from the Marshal's simple dress and modest demeanour, had no idea that he was by the side of the great Turenne. I am well aware that we ought not to lose sight of the important facts and brilliant actions of a hero, amidst these petty details, but in the eyes of a philosopher such minutiæ form by no means the least interesting part of the picture. To deprive us of them is not only a theft made from truth, but it impoverishes the sketch, it is detracting at the same time from the genius both of the hero, and of his historian; and this M. de Voltaire has done most cruelly. In consequence of the principle he lays down, not a word is said by

him of the famous suit against Peter's son; no stroke displays the character and personal qualities of the legislator of Russia. I know not whether this discretion may be pleasing to the Court of St. Petersburgh, but I know that it has made the picture very cold and meagre. One who signs his letters *the old free Swiss* ought, in the productions of his pen, to preserve this noble character of independence. To write the life of a great man with the design of courting his descendant by suppressing a part of the facts, by lowering the merit of the Czar's rivals, is an idea unworthy of a person of genius, and deserves to be punished by the fall of the whole work.—So much for what I have to say upon the preface. I found one remark in it which pleased me particularly; it is that, if there had never been but one battle fought in the world, the names of all the soldiers would have been known, and their genealogies would have descended to the remotest posterity. What a strange thing then is a battle;—for it is very certain that M. de Voltaire's remark is just.

I do not think that the patriach's great talent is writing history, and my idea is strongly confirmed by that which he has just published. The *History of Charles the twelfth* has all the fire and animation of a novel, and such a stile accords very well with the brilliant actions of a hero, who had a strong tinge of the romantic character; but this is a case single in its kind, and M. de Voltaire has never done any thing in the historical way which can be compared with it. I must observe by the

way that the voucher given for the truth of this history, by King Stanislaus, ought not to be considered as of unlimited authority. It is asserted that the ex-monarch did not give his testimony without restriction. At least, I am informed by a woman who was present at various times, when the *History of Charles the twelfth* was read to Stanislaus, that, though he exclaimed warmly in favour of the truth of some parts, he struck his foot against the ground as if fretted with the misrepresentations in others. Men are devoted to being led eternally into error. The approbation of the King of Poland, inserted in the preface to the history of the Czar, will be to posterity an unanswerable argument in favour of M. de Voltaire's veracity.

If this great man had possessed true and legitimate talents for writing history, we should see it very plainly in his *Essay on General History*. This Essay is an excellent book to put into the hands of youth, to inspire them with a love of justice, of humanity, and of benevolence; but it cannot be called the work of a historian. History requires a genius of a very profound and serious cast; the lightness, the ease, the grace which render M. de Voltaire the most seductive of philosophers, and the first *bel-esprit* of his age, do not suit the dignity of history. That rapidity of stile even, which may be delightful in giving the description of a battle, or in sketching a picture, cannot be long continued without producing a bad effect; it accords ill with common narration. The proper march of history is solemn and com-

posed; the history of the Czar Peter always runs. Such a stile pleases, I allow; but when we are arrived at the end, were we to ask ourselves what grand picture we have seen? what profound reflection we have retained? with what sublime passage we have been struck? what part we would wish to read again and again? we should not know what answer to make. A person of great wit and acuteness has said that if the gazettes were written in this stile he would never destroy one of them In making allowances for what a difficult critic may require of a historian, it must be allowed that M. de Voltaire has not done as much as might fairly be expected of him. The *History of the Czar* will hold but a second rank among his works. We have seen men sprung from nothing raise themselves to the sovereign power, but it was a perfectly novel sight to behold a sovereign descend from his throne in order to study the arts and manufactures, and submit to be called in the workshop of a mechanic by the familiar appellation of *Master Peter*. The historian of such a man ought to be as much distinguished among writers, as the hero himself was among men. M. de Voltaire's history is far from being of such a description; it wants character, and it seems as if the crime of which he has rendered himself guilty in disguising the truth by withholding some things, has had a baleful influence upon his mind and rendered his labours flat and insipid. We find at least occa-

sionally a certain languor, no traces of which are discernible in any of his other productions.

Read, for instance, the following passage: "After the campaign of 1702, he would have "Sheremets and the other officers who had distinguished themselves enter Moscow in triumph. "All the prisoners, made in the course of the "campaign, marched in the train of the conquerors. Before them were carried the Swedish "ensigns and standards with the colours of the frigate taken upon Lake Peipus. Peter laboured himself in the preparations for this ceremony, as he "had laboured in the enterprises they were destined to celebrate." This passage I consider as written with great poverty of expression, and you will find many others in the same stile.

He ought to have passed rapidly over the events of the war which we had read with much more advantage in the history of Charles the twelfth, and to have been diffuse upon every thing which might contribute towards displaying the genius of Peter; this is what we seek in reading his history. The description of the country is given in a very common-place stile, and some of the remarks on Natural History are not those of a deep philosopher. All that conerns the history of the princess Sophia ought to have been more diffuse. The picture of her cruelties is well done; one cannot without the strongest emotions hear the furious soldiers, who had just cut off the head, the feet,

and the hands of their sovereign, demand, with a loud voice, the young Peter; nor can we see this child arrive, conducted by women, carrying in his arms the image of the Holy Virgin, without being deeply affected. Yet these pictures are not in any way to be compared with the death of Germanicus, the arrival of his ashes at Rome, and others. The description of the manners of the Samoiedes is again a part which interests us very strongly. In general, however, the reflections are trivial, common, and too much interspersed with antithesis; nor can I endure the author's launching out with the vehemence he sometimes uses against obscure and contemptible antagonists.

December, 1760.

The subject of the *Fair Penitent*, celebrated by the English Tragedy, which bears this title, was brought forwards, unsuccessfully, about ten years ago, on the theatre at Paris. M. Colardeau has made a second attempt at acquiring it a reputation among us, and although much has been said against his tragedy, the performance of it has run to a certain number of times. This young poet commenced his theatrical career, some years ago, by the tragedy of *Astarbé*, and I confess that I did not then form any great idea of his talents; his new attempt has made me retract with pleasure a judgment which perhaps was too severe. It is not that the plan of his tragedy is well arranged, nor that his characters are all equally well drawn nor

that there is any one scene which can be pronounced decidedly well done. On all these points we might, without injustice, censure the tragedy of *Calista* severely; but to atone for such faults, there are beauties of the very highest description, and it is upon these that I found my hopes of what we may in time expect from the author.

Epistle to M. Laurent, upon the artificial arm which he had invented, by the Abbé Delille. Much has been said in commendation of this epistle; much more ought to be said in commendation of the hero whom it celebrates. The artificial arm of M. Laurent performs almost all the functions of the natural arm. Not only can it be used to assist in eating and drinking, and in most other occasions where the arm is wanted, but it can even be made to write. It is sufficient that any one who has been so unfortunate as to lose an arm has a very small stump left, M. Laurent fastens his machine to it, so as to supply the deficiency; its different movements are performed by means of cat-gut strings. Several experiments have been made with it before the King, and all who have seen them are astonished at the invention. This ingenious mechanist has given proofs of his talents in the invention of several other pieces of machinery.

The history of mademoiselle Corneille has made much talk for some time past. Her father

is a mechanic who descends from the great Corneille, though in a distant degree, and who has no other resemblance to his illustrious ancestor but in his name. M. de Fontenelle, a near relation of the Corneille family, did not know of the existence of this man till he presented himself before him, a short time before his death. Corneille therefore did not find himself mentioned in M. de Fontenelle's will, and he instituted a suit to invalidate it, which was entirely unsuccessful. Last year, the players had the generosity to play Rodogune, for Corneille's benefit, by which he cleared six thousand livres; mademoiselle Corneille however did not derive much advantage from it. A short time since M. Le Brun, secretary to the Prince de Conti, took it into his head to sing the sorrows of this remnant of the house of Corneille in an ode; the merits of which were certainly not of a very first rate description; it was addressed to M. de Voltaire. The latter, fired by the name of this father of the French Theatre, immediately offered to take mademoiselle Corneille under his protection, and have her brought up in his own house by his niece, Madame Denis. This occasioned several letters to pass between him and M. Le Brun, all of which have been printed. Some rich and devout relations at first opposed this arrangement, for fear lest mademoiselle Corneille's salvation should be endangered by her being entrusted to the care of the first man of the age. But since, in case of M. de Voltaire's generous

offers being refused, those who had been the occasion of the refusal, would have been deemed by the world bound to compensate the loss to her, they at length consented to send her at once to *Delices* and perdition. Envy has, as usual, endeavoured to detract from the generosity of M. de Voltaire, while the admirers of the philosopher have extolled it to the skies. He might undoubtedly have afforded his protection to the lady with less ostentation, and if, by chance, he should hereafter take a dislike to the thing, and not give her a suitable provision for life, he will only have made her more unhappy than if he had left her in indigence. Base minds alone would, however, think of foreseeing ills which may never happen, and which would not have been thought of, but for the sake of throwing odium on the character of this celebrated man.

Within the last week we have been put in possession of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's work on Education; it is in four large volumes. Of course it makes a great deal of talk, and it is said that the Parliament menaces the author with a prosecution for the profession of faith which he has introduced. It is indeed scarcely possible that intolerance and bigotry can pass over so admirable an occasion for tormenting a celebrated writer, and it is very probable that Rousseau may be obliged to quit France. This bold and eloquent author of paradoxes, has published in Holland, a

Treatise on the Social Contract, which is not to be procured at Paris; it is said to be a hundred times bolder than the work on education. I must, however, read it carefully before I pretend to write on the subject.

June, 1762.

The storm which began to gather on the first appearance of M. Rousseau's work on Education could not fail soon to break out. Upon the requisition of the Advocate-General, the Parliament has decreed the work to be burnt, and has issued a warrant for the arrest of the author. The sentence is dated the ninth of this month, but Rousseau had fortunately escaped the night before.

This writer, so celebrated for his eloquence and for his singularity, lived at the distance of three leagues from Paris, in a little town called Montmorency, but at present Enguien, because it is the capital of the duchy of that name, which belongs to the house of Condé. The valley, which extends along the foot of the slope on which this town stands, to the river Seine, is one of the prettiest spots in the neighbourhood of Paris. It is a garden of several leagues, filled with delightful country-houses, and is famous for cherries and other fruits. Just without the little town of Montmorency is a château which belongs, I think, to the Duchess de Choiseul; but the possession of which, for his life, has been purchased by the Marshal Duke de Luxembourg. During the four years that

Jean Jaques has resided in these parts, he has occupied alternately a small house of his own in the town and an apartment at the Duke's château. He has forsaken all his former friends, the philosophical part of the community, and has replaced them by persons of the highest rank. I will not decide whether he was a gainer or a loser by this change, but I believe he was as happy at Montmorency as a man with so much vanity, and so much bile, can ever hope to be. In the society which he formerly frequented, he found friendship and esteem; but the reputation of some of them, and still more the superiority of talents in others, which he could not but feel, might render their society painful to him. At Montmorency he reigned without a rival; he enjoyed, without any alloy, the incense offered him by some of the most distinguished characters in the country; not to mention a crowd of charming women, who were eager to pay him homage. The character of singularity always succeeds, in the end, with those who have sufficient courage and perseverance to adhere to it steadily. Jean Jaques Rousseau passed the former part of his life in vilifying and decrying the great, and he now discovers that he never found real friendship or virtue except among them. These two extremes were equally *philosophic*; in amusing myself with his prejudices, I often laughed at him. He had a vile little dog which he used to call *Duke*, because he said it was snarling and pitiful, like a Duke. Since he has been upon such good terms

at the château of Montmorency, the dog's name is changed from Duke to *Turk*. This disguise has something mean in it; it would have been more consistent with the character which the *Genevese Citizen* has assumed, to have continued the dog's name, as a monument of the unjust prejudices he had once entertained. He might even have made it a source of compliment to the Duke de Luxembourg, by saying to him: "It is your Grace who "has taught me to understand what a Duke really "is, and has corrected my ideas with respect to "persons about the Court." A man who occupies himself incessantly with the great, will with difficulty make others believe that they are indifferent to him. The true philosopher, in respecting their rank, does not think of them. Esteem is due only to personal qualities; and, whatever Jean Jaques Rousseau may say, it is not at all incompatible to be a Prince and to have great virtues. I have often taken delight in combating him upon this ground with his own weapons. One day he related to us, with an air of triumph, that as he was coming out of the theatre on the evening when the *Devin du Village* was first played, the Duke of Deux-Ponts accosted him, and said very politely, "Permit me, "Sir, to make my compliments to you on your "piece," and that he answered: "It is very well, "provided the compliments be short." All present at first observed a profound silence at this recital; at length I recovered my surprise sufficiently to speak, when I addressed him in these words:

"Illustrious citizen, and co sovereign of Geneva, "since a part of the sovereignty of the republic "resides in you, will you permit me to represent "that, notwithstanding the severity of your prin- "ciples, you cannot very well refuse to a sove- "reign prince the courtesies due to a water-carrier, "and if you had replied to a civil compliment, made "you by the latter, in a manner equally rude and "brutal, you would have had to reproach yourself "with a most misplaced insolence." Since he has been intimate at the château of Montmorency, he has taken to abusing the philosophers as much as he formerly abused the Great. I know not whether the latter defend the philosophers as warmly as they have often been defended by them.

Rousseau has been unfortunate almost all his life; he should have complained of his fate, and he has complained of men. This injustice is by no means uncommon where great pride is united with great timidity. Persons of this description suffer in contemplating the more prosperous situations of their neighbours, and do not see that others being unhappy would make no change in their own fate. They flatter those with whom they live in daily intercourse, and repay themselves for this constraint by giving vent to reproaches against mankind. I own that I have not a very good opinion of those who are incessantly railing at their species; we may almost always conclude, without being very uncharitable, that they are unreasonable in their own expectations. I cannot myself boast

of a very happy lot, I could easily make out a long list of grievances, some of which will probably have a considerable influence upon my fate through life; but neither can I dissemble to myself that they are almost all to be ascribed to untoward circumstances; I should wrong my fellow-creatures very much, were I to assert that malignant feeling towards me individually have had any thing to do with them. I must say, on the contrary, with great self-satisfaction, that I have never experienced from the greater part of mankind any thing but kindness, and a desire to serve and promote my interests; if this has not been the case universally, if I have been occasionally the mark at which some malignities have been aimed, to this I can oppose great numbers who have generously interested themselves for my prosperity and advancement, and who seem to have placed a part of their own happiness in seeing me happy. I am persuaded that every man who is reasonable in his expectations, and who is desirous of rendering strict justice to his fellow-creatures, would say the same. I am even doubtful whether those who are placed in elevated stations, and are consequently more exposed to the shafts of envy and jealousy, suffer more than others from the malignity of mankind; few men do ill from the mere love of doing it, and what advantage could any one hope to derive from persecuting an individual who can neither do them harm nor good.

One of M. Rousseau's great misfortunes has

been that he had attained the age of forty before he had any idea of his own talents. In his youth he learned for some time the trade of an engraver; his father, who was a watchmaker, having had the misfortune to kill a man, was obliged to fly from Geneva, and abandon his children. Jean Jaques was taken into the protection of a woman of some rank in Savoy, by name Madame de Warens. She made him abjure the Protestant religion, and took upon herself his education. This lady had a great passion for alchymy, and ruined herself by it; she is, I believe, still alive, and in great poverty. Fate having, I know not how, conducted Rousseau to Paris, he attached himself to M. de Montaigu, who, being appointed ambassador to Venice, carried him thither as his secretary. The ambassador is any thing rather than a man of talents himself, and he consequently could not discover that his secretary had any; at this very moment he is all astonishment at the reputation Rousseau has acquired, and says, with the utmost *naïveté*, that he never saw any thing in him which gave promise of it. These two men, not having any sort of analogy the one with the other, soon separated in reciprocal discontent. Rousseau returned to Paris indigent, unknown, ignorant of the resources which he had within himself, seeking in the most forlorn and outcast state the means of keeping himself from being starved. He devoted himself, at this period, to music and poetry; he published a dissertation upon a method, which he had himself invented, of

noting music with cyphers. This method did not take, and his dissertation was not read by any one. He afterwards composed the words and music of an opera, which he entitled *Les Muses Galantes*, but the music never could be executed. He had, on this occasion, a great deal of bickering with Rameau, and was deeply chagrinned and mortified that he could not get his opera accepted at the theatre. He composed, during the same period, many bad pieces of poetry, which were inserted in the *Mercury;* he also wrote some comedies, the greater part of which have never seen the day; *The Lover of Himself*, which he got acted, and which he afterwards published, proves that the mantle of Molière had not rested upon him. At the same time his mind was much engrossed with the construction of a machine, the idea of which he had conceived, and which was to enable men to fly. He persevered for a long time in his endeavours to complete this machine, but without success; still he was not undeceived as to the practicability of the undertaking, nor could he ever bear a joke upon the subject; he even now believes the thing possible, and his friends may hope one day to see him mount up into the air. In the midst of all these essays he attached himself to the wife of a farmer-general, formerly much celebrated for her beauty, and was for several years her secretary; but the constraint and sort of humiliation he felt in this situation were ill-suited to his disposition, and contributed not a little to souring his temper.

The philosopher Diderot, with whom he lived in great friendship at that time, was the first to open his eyes to his real talents, when the Academy at Dijon proposed its famous question upon the influence of letters and the sciences on morals. This subject Rousseau treated in a Dissertation which first established his literary fame, and which gave him the turn for singularity he has ever since affected so strongly. Till then he had been gallant, disposed to be coxcombical, a great complimenter, even honied in his speech, and fatiguing from being always on the hunt for some graceful turn. All on a sudden he assumed the tone and manner of a complete cynic, and, never having any thing natural in his character, went from one excess to the other. But in aiming his sarcasms around him, he was always cautious towards those with whom he lived, and amid all his causticity still retained a tincture of that refinement, and that art of making compliments, which he had before so much studied;—this was above all conspicuous in the society of women.

In assuming the livery of philosophy he quitted Madame Dupin, and took to copying music, as a means of getting his livelihood, and he said he should abjure every other; for it was always a mania of his, among many others, to abuse the trade of an author, though he was indebted for his fame to that alone. I strongly advised him to take a coffee-house in the Place of the Palais-Royal. The idea amused us for a long time;

it was not more extravagant than many of his own, and had this advantage over his own, that it was a chearful idea, and one which promised him a comfortable maintenance. All Paris would have frequented the coffee-house of Jean Jaques Rousseau; it would have been the resort of all the most distinguished characters in the literary world; but this mania, having something in it which might be useful, was too sensible to be adopted by the citizen of Geneva. He went to make a visit to his own country, whence he returned in about six weeks; during his stay there, he quitted the Roman Catholic religion, and became again a Protestant. At his return, he passed two or three years in the society of his friends, as happy as he could be, composing books, and fancying himself only a copyer of music; but it was his fate no sooner to feel his happiness than to quarrel with it. Madame de l'Epinay having a small house in the forest of Montmorency, he teazed her for a long time to lend it to him, saying that he could not live in that horrible Paris, and that he had no other asylum against men but the woods, and perfect solitude. Such a life never could be less suited to any one than to a person with a brain so heated as his, and with a disposition at once so impetuous and so melancholy. He became an absolute savage there; the solitude of the place heated his imagination to such a degree, and soured his character so entirely, both towards himself and towards his friends, that at the end of eighteen months, when he quitted

the forest, he quarrelled with all humankind. It was then that he went to live at Montmorency, where he has remained to the present moment, enjoying a reputation worthy of his talents and his eccentricities.

Such are the principal epochs in the career of this celebrated writer up to the present moment. The account of his private and domestic life would not be less curious; but it is inscribed in the memories of two or three of his select friends, who will never inscribe it any where else. It is said that he has passed his latter days in convulsions of despair and grief at the consequences of his work. He thought himself out of the reach of persecution, being connected with so many persons of the first distinction. He never conceived that the parliament would make a serious affair of it. I know him well enough to be assured that he will be inconsolable for the rest of his life at not being any longer in a country, the evils and abuses of which he was always exaggerating. They say he has taken the road of Switzerland. He will not go to Geneva, for one of his inconsistencies is to extol that place to the skies while he secretly detests it, and to love Paris passionately while he loads it with execrations.

It is astonishing that none of his new friends could foresee the effect likely to be produced by the *Profession of Faith of the Savoyard Curate*, at a moment when so many idle people and fools have no other existence or occupation but what is

inspired by the spirit of party. M. Helvetius was tormented for a few lines scattered over a large volume; one equivocal word will, in these days, occasion all sorts of vexation to a philosopher, and yet Rousseau had the folly to suppose that he could publish such a work with impunity. If *The Savoyard Curate's Profession of Faith* be compared with the requisition of the prosecutor, Master Omer Joly de Fleury, these two personages will be found to have changed characters. The Curate talks with the strength of argument, and the good sense that would suit an Advocate-General, and the advocate displays that capuchin spirit, which might reasonably be excused in a Savoyard Priest. It has been remarked, however, that the requisition is drawn up without animosity, instead of which that composed by the same Advocate, three years ago, against the work of Helvetius on *The Mind*, in which he wanted to implicate all the philosophic party under the same anathema, was in a spirit of fanaticism enough to make any body tremble for the progress of reason in France, and for the safety of those who dared to promote it. The requisition against M. Rousseau is merely a stupid and senseless capuchinical effusion. He is reproached with not believing in the Christian religion. Every body except myself has taken the deepest umbrage with the following apostrophe. "What would men be, educated in like principles, "but beings predisposed to scepticism and to 'tolerance." A magistrate proscribe tolerance!

For my part, I say, after the example of Jesus Christ, "Lord, pardon M. Omer Joly de Fleury, "for he knows not what he says!"—In fact, if any one were fairly to explain to him the true meaning of the abominable doctrine he has advanced in this passage, I have no doubt that he would blush with shame and surprise. This proves that our magistrates would do better, even for their own reputations, if they were to get their requisitions drawn up by some philosopher, than to continue repeating in full parliament, lessons suggested by bigotted works, or atrabilarious jansenists.

The twenty pages which precede the *Curate's Profession of Faith*, in M. Rousseau's book, are written with infinite art; the author has there displayed the great extent of his talents. The first part of the *Profession of Faith* itself, is dry and heavy, and contains nothing but the mere lessons of philosophy that we are taught in the schools. The Curate only becomes interesting when he enters upon the Christian religion and revelation; but never do we feel in any thing said by the citizen of Geneva, the impressions of truth and nature. What probability is there, for instance, that a man of sense, like the Curate, should make this long profession of faith to a libertine scholar, who could never have patience and curiosity enough to listen to him, and who certainly was not competent to understanding what he said. The ancients never fall into these incongruities, and this is in great measure, the cause of that

charm which secretly attaches the mind to reading even the deepest of their works; the imagination is always interested. In the third volume, there is also a fine exhortation from the governor to his pupil, just at the period when the latter attains the age of manhood. The sallies which occur every where in this discourse, are very grand. But I must enter more at large into a discussion of so extraordinary a work.

Rouseau, desirous of publishing his own peculiar ideas on the subject of education, makes choice of a pupil whom he calls Emilius. It would not do, however, to compile a mere didactic work, filled with rules, principles, and maxims; all these would be exhibited with much more effect under the form of a history. That is to say, after having given an ample view of the character of his pupil, it was necessary to sketch the history, or the fiction, of his education, without ever bringing forward any of his methods, as principles or maxims which he was seeking to inculcate. When we come to the application of his rules, we shall only find them just to a certain degree, for what suits admirably well with one disposition, will not suit at all with another, and there will always be as great a variety of dispositions to manage, as there are pupils to educate; the didactic tone would therefore not have suited a work which aimed at such an object as he had in view. In adopting the narrative form, no answer can be made to facts narrated historically without precepts or pedantry.

provided the writer has genius sufficient to establish a perfect correspondence between the character given to the pupil, and the method followed in his education, and that it is made to appear clearly that the method to be recommended has produced the effects ascribed to it.

Such is at least the manner in which I had long ago conceived the idea of writing a *Treatise upon Education;* the successful execution of it might perhaps have been above my powers, but it would not have been above my courage to engage in the attempt, had other cares and occupations left me the leisure for it. I purposed to exhibit a charming young couple, united by the tenderest ties, after having experienced a long series of obstacles to the completion of their wishes, and enjoying the greatest happiness, in reciprocally loving and being beloved. But their happiness lasts only for a moment; the husband, in becoming a father, becomes the most wretched of men, by losing the wife he adores; nothing prevents his falling a victim to his grief, but the thought of the pledge which, dying, she left to his cares. Here he is then, alone in the world, with no other tie but this child. His loss effects a total change in his character; he quits his places, to retire into the country, and there, when the violence of his grief, has, after a while, yielded to a soft and tender melancholy, consecrates his whole time, his whole cares to the education of his son. The history of this son, to the age of eighteen, was to

form my *Treatise upon Education*; not that I should have given my work this title, I should cautiously have avoided it; neither should I have given it the livery of a *Treatise*, by filling it with principles, maxims, and methods. I should simply have narrated the history of the father and the son, without ever holding out their example as models. Far from ostentatiously displaying the end proposed by my work, I should have taken all possible means to conceal that I had any other end in view but to give my history, trusting to the historical simplicity of my narrative for the rest. M. Rousseau has thought proper to give a mixed work, sometimes historical, sometimes didactic, but I cannot help believing that mine, such as I had conceived it, would have had more the air of a work of genius; assuredly it would not have had the air of pedantry, which disfigures the work of the Citizen of Geneva. For the rest, our author seems to have taken a pleasure in controverting many of my ideas, for such he well knew them to be, upon this important subject; he has not, however, done it in a manner that convinces me I am wrong. The only leading idea of mine which he has preserved, is not giving any notions of God and religion to his pupil, till he is arrived at the age of reason. My young man, at the age of fifteen, was never to have heard the name of God repeated; he would then, most assuredly, at least, never have taken it in vain; nor could the Advocate-General have attacked an author who only related histori-

cally that a father educated his son in such, or such, a manner.

It may be remarked that, according to this idea, as many historical treatises upon education may be written as there are domestic situations to furnish the ground-work of them. Thus the history of the father and mother of a numerous family might be composed, and this history, approaching nearer to the general and common situations which occur in life, might be rendered much more instructive than what I had imagined. There is no occasion to say that the condition and characters of the personages in these treatises ought to be defined with as much care and precision as in any other species of novel. Without this, there could be no appearance of truth, and they would fail of being as instructive as they might be. Common-place maxims do not instruct,—instruction must be drawn from examples and history. If maxims and sayings could form the mind to wisdom, we should have as many wise men in the world, as we now have their opposites; for, of maxims and sayings there is no scarcity in any country. We hear nothing else all our lives, whether in our churches, in our theatres, in our colleges, or in our domestic institutions; the taste for preaching is a most universal one, and you know how much we are the better for it. To add one word more respecting my young man, I make him die at the age of eighteen, at the moment when the father expects to reap the harvest of all his toils and anxieties;

for it is always good to put people in mind of the instability of our hopes and our projects. This gives greater truth to the picture, at the same time that it assists the soul, which is doomed to struggle with misfortunes, to bear them with the greater patience, and warns those who are in prosperity to enjoy their happiness with wisdom and moderation.

The most important, and the most general remark to be made upon education is, that it must always be subjected to the imperfection inseparable from every thing human. Whatever care you may take of your son, be upon your guard against supposing that you can be his only guide. That necessity which disposes of us, that combination of a multitude of exterior circumstances which are perpetuated, or renewed, during the whole course of our lives, must inevitably have an influence upon your pupil, and that fate which holds the father and mother under its controul, must necessarily have a no less powerful influence over the child; we are all under an invisible hand. Frederick, educated by a monk under the canopy of a throne which had never been shaken, would perhaps have been only an ordinary man, an idle king, whose name, unknown to glory, would have had nothing to distinguish it in the chronicles of his times. But born to a throne which was as yet too imperfectly established to be placed out of danger, the Sovereign of a people whose misfortunes became his own, the chief of an army, the

defeat of which would have shaken his crown, and not less exposed his own person than the welfare of his subjects, he was compelled, by fate, to learn the great art of reigning, to be worthy of his rank, to balance the greatness of his dangers by the greatness of his virtues, and to present one of the finest lives that was ever traced by the pen of a historian. Greece, confined within such narrow boundaries, so circumscribed in territory, became a nursery of great men, while the widely-extended empire of Persia could scarcely boast a name worthy of record. All languished in that enervated country, in indolence and apathy, while in Greece the great examples that were constantly presented to the eyes of the youth excited in them the highest virtue, inspired them with the sentiments that led to the performance of the most splendid and illustrious actions.

You will easily judge that an author who could forget the influence which both public and private destiny must necessarily have upon education, would compose but a very indifferent treatise. You will judge farther, that an author who, to shew the success of his system, resorts perpetually to a concurrence of circumstances perfectly unnatural, which the vicissitudes of human affairs would hardly permit, must lose his time and his trouble. Nor is it enough that Rousseau errs in both these ways, he is not a man to do any thing by halves, and if to humour him you have put fate entirely out of the question, or have been willing to ima-

gine all the concurrence of circumstances that he requires,—if you have regulated the whole world so as to accommodate the wants of Emilius, and the caprices of his tutor, and then think you may flatter yourself with seeing the system of education completely successful, you will be deceived. If a single one only of those chances occur, which no human prudence can prevent or foresee,—if in the course of eighteen or twenty years of assiduous care, one indiscreet word, one inconsiderate smile or movement should escape from the governor, *every thing fails, all is lost.* This sentence M. Rousseau seems to take a particular pleasure in repeating, since we scarcely travel over five or six pages in any part of his book without being met by it. If so many impossible things are requisite, in order to educate a man as he ought to be educated, we had better at once renounce all ideas of education. If the Emilius of the *Citizen of Geneva* were a God whose destiny was to establish for ever the happiness of the human species, and that his education was the most important of all concerns to us, I defy any one to succeed so as to satisfy M. Rousseau; he would still repeat at every moment his favorite adage: "*All is finished, all is lost.*"

In general it may be said, that his *Treatise on Education* is a collection of things true and false, of contradictions, of great and sublime beauties, of dull and senseless impertinences, of things deeply affecting, and of things perfectly dry, of ex-

travagant and absurd systems, and of just views, of things consoling to human nature, and of satires and calumnies against mankind. One great defect in M. Rousseau is the want of truth and nature, another, and a still greater, is to be always wanting in sincerity. His reasonings are composed of a multitude of truths and a multitude of falsehoods and errors. We cannot promise ourselves to refute the latter with success, and yet every attentive reader must see their folly and vanity. This is the reason why our citizen never could persuade any body that letters are the scourge of mankind, that the theatre is the school of corruption, that man is made for a savage life and not to live in society; while, for the same reason, he has scarcely found any adversary worthy of him. We admire his talents, but we are sorry that he does not make a better use of them. We may also say that Rousseau is always in the right, when other men are in the wrong, and always in the wrong when other men are in the right; because he seeks less to follow the truth, than to say things differently from other people, and prescribe differently from what they prescribe. We are astonished to find by the side of an idea full of elevation and of an inexpressible charm, an absurdity wholly devoid of common sense.

We may, I believe, nearly lay it down as a certainty, that every thing in his book concerning education, is grounded upon false principles, and is wholly futile. Not only does he take ir lescriba-

ble pains to teach his Emilius, even in his tenderest years, things which a child, though he be ever so much neglected, learns of itself,—not only does one precept destroy another, while the author contradicts himself at every page, but I defy any one to employ with success any of the methods prescribed by him. He says indeed at every moment: *My Emilius is so, and so,* he finds in him the most enlarged views, the most sublime sentiments, the most wonderful conduct, but we never see how all these wonders are the result of his preceptor's system, or the necessary consequence of the means employed to render him an *unique.* In fact the greater part of M. Rousseau's principles are little conformable to human nature, and his practices are so puerile that we are astonished, as I have said, how a man of genius and talents can fall into absurdities so extravagant. If a person of discernment can find in his modes of institution one single view that is just, useful, or philosophic, mankind must hitherto not have had common sense; and we must all learn of the Citizen of Geneva to produce, with faculties such as ours, effects wholly different from those which have been regarded, till now that we are better taught, as conformable to the nature of things.

Another thing not less curious, is to see this writer every where preaching up the strictest adherence to truth, yet constantly employing artifice and falsehood to excite his pupil to do what he requires of him. If Rousseau believes that it is

so easy to conceal the truth from children, to mislead them with respect to the characters of those about them and their own real situation, with respect to what they can, and what they cannot do, he may be assured that a matter obvious to the most common observer has escaped him. We cannot have been in the habit of intercourse with many children, without seeing with what astonishing justness they judge every thing that interests them, every body that is in any way directly concerned with them, and how useless it would be to attempt to deceive them in this respect.

Emilius must then be considered, like all the other works of Rousseau, not as a book useful to mankind, not as the work of a philosopher with whom we should like to pass our lives, to philosophize with him, and receive instruction from him, but as an immense collection of desultory matter, which leads the reader to reflect upon a great variety of subjects. As a work the author of which has with infinite art, by the assistance of a stile full of strength and fire, found means to interest us, even when he goes ever so much astray or is ever so insincere;—as a work the character of which will always be precious, one while from the talents of the author, another from his singularities. The last two volumes appear to me infinitely superior to the others.

The *Social Contract* is said to be precisely of the same stamp; to be obscure and embarrassed in its principles, often futile and flat, often bold,

elevated, and admirable. Measures so effectual have been taken at the post office, that those who have endeavoured to procure it by that means have had their expenses for their trouble. Unless a person will go to Holland for it and bring it into Paris in his pocket, it is not possible to have it here. In six months it will however be displayed in all the shops by the side of the *Treatise on Education,* and *Helvetius on the Mind.*

The council of Geneva have had these two works, from the hand of their citizen, burnt by the hangman, and decreed, besides, that if the author should come to Geneva, he shall be arrested and carried before a magistrate to answer to his principles. This procedure, absurd and inconsiderate enough, is very likely to carry Jean Jacques into his own country. In a democracy he can scarcely fail to have many partisans, and to enter Geneva in spite of the decree of the council would be infinitely more gratifying than to go there unopposed. Then would our philosopher become the head of a party among the people, and by their movements and combinations M de Voltaire might perhaps even be molested in his retreat at *Delices.* These however are only conjectures, but thus much is certain; that M. Rousseau is already arrived at Yverdun, eighteen leagues from Geneva.

July, 1762.

The Death of Socrates, a Tragedy in three acts, by M. de Sauvigny, an officer of the guards to

Stanislaus, King of Poland, was intended to be acted at the French Theatre. M. de Sauvigny has not hitherto presented the public with any thing but little fugitive pieces, anacreontic odes and other trifles, which do not lead to the presumption that he is capable of handling a subject of such importance. Since M. de Voltaire failed in treating it, from want of depth and gravity, it is not very much to be hoped that M. de Sauvigny can succeed. If he may rhyme with facility, his poetry is so light, so devoid of ideas, that we may justly impute to him the sterile abundance which the philosopher of Sans-Souci discovers in the writings of the Cardinal poet. Now there could scarcely be found another subject that requires ideas equally grand and profound with the *Death of Socrates*. Be this as it may, M. de Sauvigny's piece was ready to appear; the day for its being performed was even announced; when an inhibition against playing it was received from the police. The reason assigned in the world is, that it was full of allusions which might be applied to Monseigneur Christopher de Beaumont Archbishop of Paris, and the lords of parliament, as reflections upon the hatred and animosity with which every thing in the shape of philosophy is at present pursued. I think that the proscription of Rousseau has contributed very much to the suppression of this piece; it was feared that the pit would make continual applications to the passing events of the day. It is said that the author has permission to print his piece;

if he should avail himself of this, we shall be enabled to judge how far the apprehensions of the Police appear to have been well founded.

M. Prosper Jolyot de Crebillon, of the French Academy, is just dead, at the age of eighty-nine or ninety years. This tragic poet enjoyed a high reputation, which he owed less to his merit than to having had M. de Voltaire as his competitor in the theatrical career. Dark envy and base jealousy delighted to elevate Crebillon at the expense of his rival, to extol him as the real tragic genius, while they would allow nothing more to M. de Voltaire than that he was a pleasing writer. We heard Crebillon's tragedies constantly extolled, while Voltaire's were constantly played. I do not say that Crebillon's tragedies are devoid of merit, but I do say, that neither as a tragic genius, nor under any other point of view, is he to be compared to M. de Voltaire; and this opinion I have no doubt will be confirmed by posterity. Even the finest of Crebillon's pieces, *Atreus and Thyestes*, is scarcely ever played; his Electra was, at its first appearance, very successful. This is what cannot be said of the Electra of M. de Voltaire, and the latter certainly is very far from being without defects; yet, such as it is, I am persuaded that it will insensibly disgust the public with the puerile and impertinent romance upon which the Electra of M. de Crebillon is founded, and which I defy any person of good taste to sanction. *Rhodamistus and Zenobia* has

undoubtedly its beauties; but the plot is so involved, that it is impossible for any body to understand it. These three are the only pieces of M. de Crebillon that are at present ever acted.

If we seek the real cause of all the extravagancies and eccentricities of Jean Jaques Rousseau, we shall find it in the character of that ideal chimerical man which he has created to himself, and has substituted every where for the natural man, such as he has existed for between five and six thousand years. Is it astonishing that, having nothing but a fictitious model in his head, he has always failed in truth and nature, whenever he has pretended to write upon man, upon his moral relations, upon his rights and upon his duties. If any one can have just pretensions to vilifying and reviling a class of beings to whom he can never belong, M. Rousseau has reason to calumniate philosophers; he will always be regarded as an eloquent writer, never as a profound philosopher.

He is not the first person, however, that has tortured himself to establish that chimerical state which writers on natural and political rights have been pleased to denominate the state of nature, and to extol the advantages ascribed to it. Nothing can be more puerile than the systems which have been formed on this head. If we knew for certain that the human race had lived for several ages in this state, which, on the contrary, we may be perfectly assured never did

exist, what must we conclude from it?—that the state of society, which has succeeded to it, is contrary to our nature? I should be quite as well satisfied if I were told that fish were created originally to live in the air, and to perch upon trees, and that they are only degraded and sunk in the scale of creation since they took it into their heads to plunge into the waters. I am very sorry that Doctor Swift is dead, without having written the history of the fish in this their primitive state, and of their fall; he would have given us an admirable picture of the piscine race, and shown how all their present miseries arise from their depraved taste for water, and from having lost the delightful habit of frequenting the air.

In good truth, can a philosopher, endowed with the least sense, persuade himself that any species of beings, whatever, can quit their natural state, and exist, for a long series of ages, in a state entirely opposite to their nature. If it were possible for a species to attempt any thing contrary to their nature, they must in the very first act, at the very first essay, cease to exist. There is this difference between a salutary air and a pestiferous air, that in the one we live, in the other we die. It is a very fine thing to have discovered for a certainty that the human species lived for thousands of years in that state of nature which our doctors have so highly embellished; since the state of society, with all its appendages, civil and moral, has succeeded to it, and men have still lived on for more

thousands of years, it is evident that the two states are equally conformable to human nature. All I can grant to the chimera of our writers is, that this state of nature was one of pure unmixed felicity, and that the state of society is one replete with misery and misfortune; but, in short, it has resulted from the other, and it was therefore impossible that man should not fall into it. I know not how to reason against facts. Emilius, at the age of five-and-twenty, enjoys, thanks to the liberality of M. Rousseau, all the advantages of the most brilliant youth; but nothing can prevent his arriving one day at the age of decrepitude, when all these advantages must be lost. Thus to reproach the human species with the state of society is as philosophic as to arraign an old man of sixty for having exchanged his fine brown hair for grey.

But do we indeed, in the whole history of man, find any traces of this state of nature which our doctors of that school have been pleased to represent to us in colours so magnificent. Not only are we absolutely ignorant whether man ever did live in such a state, but, when we compare it with the knowledge which we have been able to acquire upon the subject, we have a right to infer that the human species never could exist in it for a single moment. We see clearly that man, such as he is represented to us in a state of nature, is a very different being from man, such as we see him before our own eyes; and that such as we see him now, he strongly resembles the species which his-

tory has made known to us for between five and six thousand years. In whatever manner the human race may have commenced, I cannot but feel that a being, feeble, timid, and endowed with imagination like man, must even from the first moment of his existence have sought the society of his kind, have been terrified at solitude and darkness, have been uneasy at the least noise, not have heard even the rustling of the leaves, when agitated by the wind, without shuddering, without a feeling of horror, and supposing every where an invisible power. Here then we have the origin of religion and society, arising, not from the excellence, but from the weakness of our nature. I feel, farther, that the passions being inseparable from our nature, mankind must always have been susceptible of great virtues, and of great crimes; and the combinations of every thing that enters into our essence being infinite, I feel that it is the property of our species to be composed of all sorts of dispositions and qualities, and to be subjected to the natural results from them. All that happens to a species happens conformably to its nature, because it cannot subsist for an instant out of its nature. They who have written contrary to these principles, have painted an imaginary man who never existed, and a chimerical condition on which no chain of reasoning can be founded. They have taken a view of man only on one side, they have endowed him with such and such faculties, and

forgot all others; they have in particular forgot that man has not such a faculty or such a faculty singly, but that he is a compound of combined faculties which exist all together; this produces among them relations, modifications, and combinations without number. Our philosophers have for some time past acted with man as many organists act with their instruments; they put together different combinations of notes according to their caprice, and suppose it harmony; but who will consider such, as fine composers. The Abbé de Condillac, in his *Treatise on Sensations*, and M. Rousseau, after his example, in his first volume on *Education*, alternately give and take away the same senses from a man, in order to imagine results which have no existence but in their own hollow heads. But, gentlemen, be so good as to consider that man is not an organ, that there is not a note to be heard in him so absolutely single as that the others shall have no part in the effect produced. Thus our doctors have sometimes represented man as in a state of entire innocence, but insulated; sometimes in society, loaded with crimes, surrounded with horrors of every kind. These two pictures are equally unphilosophic: but they have produced the finest, the most eloquent sallies against the human species, the most sublime lamentations over its crimes and misfortunes. Immortal Dean of Dublin, sublime Swift! I recur again to thee!—A single stroke of thy humour, a single line often of thy writings, has more salt,

more philosophy, more depth of thought, than the most elaborate works of our didactic writers. Come among us, great shade! to reproach sheep with associating themselves together in flocks. Although within the memory of man no sheep was ever known to lead a solitary life, draw them an enchanting picture of that state of felicity, when every sheep fed in the forests apart from all his brethren. Represent to them with the necessary vehemence, all the misfortunes, all the inconveniences attending living in flocks, amongst which one of the greatest will be to be submitted to the will and caprice of a despotic shepherd, and of his dogs, more arrogant than he. Perhaps after thy sermon we shall see the sheep disband themselves, and reproach man with not having profited better, after their example, by the lessons of their doctors.

M. Rousseau has, according to custom, carried these ideas much farther than any of his predecessors. He maintains that there is no original perverseness in the heart of man, that the first movements of nature are always upright. He might with equal truth tell us that there are naturally no stinted trees in the world, that all grow equally upright, stately, and tall, that it is only since cultivation has mingled itself among them that we see trees knotty and deformed. He may say also that ugliness does not, like beauty, belong to the nature of man, that it is only a consequence of the art used in the toilette. All these propositions are nearly equally true and philosophical.

It is, however, on these foundations that M. Rousseau has established his *Treatise on Education*. We must not then be astonished if his methods are so chimerical, if his means are so little in conformity with human nature, if his details are so filled with falshoods, if his principles are so vague and unfruitful, if he puts forth such a multitude of assertions bold, gratuitous and devoid of common sense. They have all their origin in that false and ideal man, which the author has formed to himself, and which never existed. He would have the first education purely negative; if that were not absolutely impossible, the principle would be, not the less, absolutely false. The analogy which M. Rousseau incessantly employs to establish the existence of the general laws of nature, proves irrefutably that there is one which dictates the early cultivation of the child's powers. Give a tree in its infancy an education purely negative, and you will soon see it bending under a profusion of branches that exhaust it; the evil will even be the greater in proportion as the sap is strong and vigorous. M. Roussean, besides, proscribes every habit, whether good or bad. Following his taste for antitheses, he says that the only good habit, is not to take any; as if an animal such as man, the very essence of whose nature is to be addicted to habits, could at his choice cease to have them; in fact, would not a child of twelve years old, if he could have attained that age, living by himself in the woods, away from all his species, have con-

tracted habits without number. The concurrence of exterior objects, and the circumstances which result from them, compel us in a manner that no masters or tutors can ever counteract, to adopt numberless habits; the only care of our masters should be, to endeavour to make us contract those of truth, of virtue, and of courtesy. In another place, M. Rousseau asserts that the actions of a child are destitute of morality or immorality. If he means only to say that a child may with perfect innocence be guilty of a criminal action, he has expressed a very common-place idea in a very vague manner; a man even may be so circumstanced. But it is impossible to conceive a moral being at any age soever, committing actions destitute either of morality or immorality; all the difference is, that the morality of a child is of a very different kind from that of a man who has attained the full use of his reason. In the same place, our *educationist* condemns emulation, confounding it purposely with envy and pitiful jealousy, in order to reprobate it; he would substitute for it a well-regulated liberty. But ask him what he means by this well-regulated liberty, and I am much mistaken if he can attach any reasonable sense to it. "Ne-"ver talk to your pupil," he says, "of duty; "necessity ought to be his only curb." Let me understand, if you please, master tutor, how these two ideas are to be separated, and how the one is more easy to be understood than the other. The idea of necessity and its irrevocable decrees is one

of the most philosophic that we have, it appears to belong to the age of matured reason. Imprudent youth and blind passion are revolted at this idea, they are perpetually wrestling against the inflexible law of necessity, and you would have a child resign himself to it quietly,—a child to whom you refuse all use of reason, and who assuredly has no experience in life.—What absurdity!

It is, however, upon these maxims, and others of a similar nature, that M. Rousseau founds his principles of education; or rather he founds nothing, because the greater part of his principles are sterile, embarrassed, and can produce nothing; no real tie can be perceived between them and the methods which he gives as resulting from them. He appears to have established them only in order to decry opinions commonly received, to combat rational customs. It is thus that he draws the most affecting picture of the state of nature, and takes from this state even the germ of vice, only that he may find a reason to ascribe all the ills, all the vices of our actual situation to ourselves alone, that he may make them the result of our own work. In consequence of this turn he would not have people reason with children, only because the admirable Locke recommends it, and that it is in fact one of the most sensible principles in education that can be laid down. But how does he prove that we ought not to reason with children?—it is by proving that you ought not to impose your own reasonings upon them. But when Locke re-

commends reasoning with children, he does not propose that you should substitute your own reasonings for theirs; he would have you reason with them in a manner suited to their understandings, he would have you listen to their reasonings, he would have you correct them where they are false, teaching them at the same time how to correct them in future, themselves, by their own reflections; those you will know how to call forth in their minds, without infecting them with pedantry, if you be not a fool yourself. There certainly is not a maxim in M. Rousseau's work of half so much value as this.

If you would follow with the same exactitude all the assertions made by the Citizen of Geneva, you would find every where the same want of truth and philosophy, and would finish by being persuaded that this eloquent writer neither knows the attributes of human nature, nor those of infancy, and that even when there is a sort of truth in any thing he advances, he renders it nugatory by the extreme to which it is carried. Thus he lays it down as a principle, that in good cultivation every thing ought to be retarded as much as possible. It is very true, that if matters are over precipitated, the fruit will be abortive, and never perfectly matured, but if they are over retarded, the fruit will be rotten. The true precept of good education is neither to precipitate nor retard too much. He says also that in no case whatever should the pupil be kept to any occupation till he

grows weary with it, for, he adds, it is much less important that he should learn, than that he should not be compelled to do any thing. This is one of the consequences of that principle of liberty, the effects and results of which we seek to penetrate in vain. M. Rousseau would not on any account have either compulsion or restraint employed with his pupil. I am very ready to allow, that those who have the care of children are entirely in the wrong to break their heads continually, for every trifling negligence, or waywardness, and that it is a nice point to determine how far we ought to resist the obstinacy which they are accustomed to shew. In such contests, the mind is often too much broken down, and in being forced to yield up its obstinacy loses its resolution. But what an absurdity is it to think of accustoming a being who is to pass his life under the irresistible yoke of necessity, who must constantly be controuled by a thousand circumstances which no earthly means can resist,—what absurdity is it, I say, to train up such a being with the idea that he is never to be compelled to do any thing.

I do not pretend to advert to every passage in the *Treatise on Education*, which appears open to attack. I never could see the utility of refutations. They who think have no occasion for a prompter to tell them, Gentlemen, this is a sophism, this is true, or this is false; as to fools to point out the truth to them, to attempt to make them feel the defects of erroneous reasoning, is

most truly lost trouble. In my opinion, there is nothing more useless than to refute a book, except it be to reply to the refutations; though the spirit of party will not be satisfied with this. It is essential for the support and credit of a party that even a bad answer, rather than none, should be made to a good attack; since, if you are tormented with exaggerated representations of the strokes made at you by the enemy, you must always have it to say that they were answered. But for my part, as I am not of any party, I am of opinion that the end of every writer ought to be to communicate to the small and select groupe of men of real talents the results of his meditations, confiding them to the sound judgment of his peers, at the same time that he abandons them to the passion and the imbecility of fools. Happy he, who, escaping the arrows of the latter, has written only for persons equally enlightened and indulgent; since indulgence is the child of good sense and real knowledge.

In taking my leave of the *Treatise on Education* I cannot help calling your attention to some things which do not properly belong to the essence of the book, but which are of sufficient importance to give them a moment's consideration. Sometimes we have no occasion to do more than point out the sentiment of the author to make the weakness and falshood of it immediately felt. At other times his assertions have an air of truth which may at first deceive, but which cannot stand when put to the proof.

M. Rousseau has, in all his works, declaimed vehemently against politeness. It is not his fault if we do not regard it as an infamous hypocrisy, much more pernicious than the most decided vice. Politeness consists in making use of exaggerations, in employing forms of speech which he, to whom they are addressed, is never supposed to take literally. There is no language in the world that does not abound with these forms. Roman politeness was certainly very different from French; yet the Latin language is full of these forms which the Romans made use of familiarly in their intercourse with each other. Even savages, those beloved children of the Citizen of Geneva, have a politeness more extravagant and less natural than that of polished nations. See how their treaties abound with exaggerations, with forms full of bombast and falshood. What is to be concluded from this?—Nothing, except that of whatever nature the society and intercourse which subsists among men may be they cannot continue, they cannot even begin, without reciprocal regards and forbearance; and whereever these exist, there must be politeness, that is *exaggeration*, in the forms of speech. Nothing could be more absurd than to expect, of a being organised like man, that he should attach a precise and invariable sense to every word which chance may lead him to utter. Thus Emilius, who says *do this*, or *do that*, instead of *will you be so obliging as to do it*, is a very ill-bred child, but he has not for that reason a

grain more virtue, indeed he has on this very account, rather less than one who conforms his modes of speech to established usages. There cannot be any thing more idle and frivolous than declamations against politeness.

The hope and illusion that result from it are the great springs which move all human action. It is of the essence of man to enjoy more the good he hopes for, than that which he has obtained. The allegory of Pandora's box whence all the passions and all the ills that afflict mankind are suffered to escape, and where hope alone is left as the remedy against them all, is very fine. But hope is proscribed by M. Rousseau under the name of foresight. He reproaches us with looking always to the future and disregarding the present; this again is to reproach us with being organized as we are. How can a being endowed with imagination renounce hope and illusions. This man full of joy and health, the picture of happiness and content, who turns pale as death and falls into a swoon at the receipt of a letter, is the man of nature, against whom oratorical declamations may be made, but they will be any thing rather than solid and philosophic. The health and joy of this man arose not so much from his actual state as from his hopes; they are destroyed by a letter; why would you not allow the effect of the ill to be in proportion to that of the good. He is the true madman who feels nothing

but the inconveniences of his organization, without feeling any of its advantages. The atrabilarious misanthrope is a much greater madman than he who, naturally cheerful and serene, is overcome by learning a piece of afflictive news.

What I would farther efface from this *treatise on education* is the strange apology for ingratitude. M. Rousseau contends that no such thing can exist as an ungrateful person. One cannot forbear thinking that an author has his reasons for excusing, or palliating the most hideous of all the vices that degrade human nature. M. Rémond de Saint-Mard, who is known by some very indifferent works and still more from being very rich and very avaricious, one day made a long and terrible declamation against human nature. The philosopher Diderot, who was present, stopped him in the midst of his career and said: "Where do you "learn all this ill that you impute to mankind?"— "In myself," answered Rémond. This at least was frank.

August, 1762.

A very seditious letter in favour of M. Rousseau, and against M. de Voltaire has just appeared at Geneva. It was at first feared that it might disturb the tranquillity of the republic; but M. Rousseau has not courage enough to avail himself of the transient fermentation, and the council of Geneva is pursuing the author of the letter with

the utmost alacrity. The Council of Berne has also condemned the works of the Citizen of Geneva, and ordered the author to quit the Canton. In vain did the citizen present a remonstrance against this order, he was forced to obey it, and he has retired into the principality of Neufchâtel. There he is then, under the protection of a monarch whom he professes to hate, though he can have no other reason to assign for his hatred, than that he sees him the great object of public admiration. There is in his book a very violent and indiscreet passage upon this subject, and this would be with the Great Frederick one reason more for respecting the misfortunes of so eccentric and illustrious a writer, in spite of fools and of his own waywardness.

Saracen Fables.

Fable I.

In the days of Isa, three men were travelling together. By the way they found a treasure and it rejoiced them much. They continued their route but they were seized with hunger, and one of them said: "We want something to eat, but who shall "go and seek for food?"—That will I" answered the second. He departed, he purchased food, but he thought within himself that he would poison the meats, for then, said he, my companions will be put out of the way and the treasure will rest with

me alone. Meanwhile, during his absence the other two agreed to kill him, that his share of the treasure might be theirs. He arrived, and they killed him accordingly; they eat the meats that he brought and they died. Thus was the treasure left without an owner.

Fable II.

One evening after supper, my father, my brothers, my sisters, and myself were all seated together round the fire. I meditated for some time and then opening the holy Koran began to read aloud, but my brothers and my sisters fell asleep, my father alone listened to me. Surprized, I said to him, "My "father, is it not shameful that my brothers and sis- "ters should fall asleep, and that you alone should "listen to me?"—But he answered: "My son, "dear part of myself, would it not be better that "you should sleep like them, than be vain, as you "are, of what you are doing?"

Fable III.

A King having condemned one of his subjects to death, the unhappy victim solicited pardon in vain, the king was inflexible. When the man found that he must perish, his heart was irritated, his tongue swelled, and he loaded the monarch with reproaches. The monarch saw that the man spoke, but could not hear him, and asked of one of the courtiers what he said. The courtier replied: "Prince, he says, that they who practice

" mercy in this world shall obtain it in the next, " where we shall be judged." The monarch, moved with what he heard, granted the culprit his life; but another courtier taking upon himself to speak, said to the first that it was not for men like them to lie to their sovereign. Then turning to the sovereign, he told him that the man had broke out into the bitterest revilings against him. To this the Prince replied: " I prefer the other's lies to thy " truth. They made me perform a deed of mercy, " thy truth sought to make me perform an act of " severity. His falsehood saved life, thy truth " would have destroyed it." Then turning to the first he said: " I will not, however, have any " one lie to me."

January, 1763.

A collection has been made, in a pretty large volume, of every thing published relative to the unfortunate Calas family. Besides the *Observations*, and the sequel to them printed at Toulouse, during this horrible suit, and independently of the papers which we owe to M. de Voltaire, you will find here memorials from three celebrated advocates, M. Elie de Beaumont, M. de Mariette, and M. de Loiseau, all of which are fine. The latter enjoys the largest share of reputation, since the author has treated his subject in a manner less learned and more popular than the others. Notwithstanding all that has been done, however, by these gentlemen, it is not to be supposed that the subject is

entirely exhausted. A hundred secret strings belonging to this affair have not yet been struck, and if they were struck, the sound emitted would not be trifling.

Let us, for instance, examine what sort of an argument might be drawn from the death alone of the unfortunate father. If this man, the advocate might say, murdered his son for fear he should change his religion, he must have been a fanatic, and one of the most violent of fanatics. He believed in God, he loved his religion more than his life, more than the life of his son, and preferred seeing his son dead to seeing him an apostate. He must then have regarded his crime as an act of heroism, and the murder of his son as a sacrifice offered up to his God. In this case what would have been his address to his judges?—what has been the language held by other fanatics in similar circumstances?—Thus would he have spoken. "Yes, I have murdered my son, and if the affair "were to be acted over again, I would do the "same.—Yes, I preferred plunging my hand in my "blood, to hearing a child of mine abjure his faith. "If this be a crime I have committed one, bear me "to my punishment."—Compare this speech with the address really made by the unfortunate Calas. "He protests his innocence, he calls heaven to "witness it; he regards his death as a punishment "from heaven for some secret and unknown of-"fence, and prays that he may be judged by his "God with as much severity as he has been by

" men, if he is guilty of the crime laid to his " charge. He calls the death of his son a crime, " he hopes to meet his judges at the great tribunal, " there to be confronted with them, and to con- " found them." Supposing him guilty, he lies in the face of heaven and of earth, he lies in his last moments, he devotes himself to eternal perdition. He was an atheist I may perhaps be told; but if he was an atheist he was not a fanatic, and would not have murdered his son for any question that concerned religion. " Choose," I would have said to the judges, " if he was an atheist, a de- " spiser of every kind of worship, a disbeliever " in a God, would he have murdered his son for " such a reason?—would his son's change of re- " ligion have been an offence in the eyes of a man " who disbelieved all religions?—If on the con- " trary, Calas was a fanatic, he might have mur- " dered his son, but never would he have dis- " owned, in dying, an action which he must have " regarded as glorious, as dictated by heaven, as " acceptable to heaven. He would have lost the " merit of the action in disowning it, his dying " lips would have condemned himself; he would " have regarded an action in which he ought to " have gloried as a crime. He was himself an " apostate, and punished by man in this world, he " called down upon himself a heavier punishment " from heaven in another."—I notice these matters without order, without fire, without force, but from the pen of a man of talents, and eloquence,

skilful in the art of persuasion, such reasoning might have been rendered of irresistible force.

Unfortunately, however, these were means which could not be resorted to till after the crime was completed on the part of the judges of Toulouse. There is another matter which the advocates have touched but slightly, and which might have been rendered one of the strongest bucklers to a man accused of an almost unprecedented crime; it is the unblemished probity and integrity which he had sustained during an existence of more than sixty years. Of what avail is a life passed in honour, if it cannot shield us against the attacks of malignity, and the suspicion of a horrible crime. There is then no distinction in uncertain cases between the man of integrity and the known villain; nothing speaks more in favour of the one than of the other; they are to be equally abandoned to fate. Or, if the wicked man when accused is already half convicted from the course of his past life, why is not the honest man to be half absolved from his. I only ask here for the justice exercised towards the wicked, and which is dictated by natural equity; but every criminal code of a country which would not be considered as wholly barbarous, ought to hold as a first and incontestable principle that it were better twenty guilty should escape the rigour of the law, than that one innocent man should be its victim. It is then the cause of acknowledged virtue and honour that is to be pleaded. When we see a father in

the decline of life torn from the bosom of his family, where he lived in tranquillity, honoured and beloved, and where he hoped to die in peace;—when we see him accused of a crime which makes nature shudder, conducted to the scaffold upon hearsay evidence alone, there is not a heart which ought not to recoil with horror, at the thought of what may be in reserve for himself. Virtue is no longer of any weight, the honest man no longer sees any thing in himself which may protect him against events; the example of Calas proves that his past conduct will address itself vainly to the protection of the laws. The tragic fate of this man thus becomes the cause of the public, his judges are guilty of the crime of high-treason in attacking in its very principle the safety of the citizens.

It is under such a point of view doubtless that Demosthenes or Cicero would principally have defended this most important, and unfortunately too celebrated cause. This is what will hold up the judges of Toulouse to the execration of all ages; nay, if it be true, that they deviated in the most trifling manner from the forms prescribed in all criminal proceedings, and it appears clearly demonstrated that they deviated from them essentially, they ought to be exposed to the most rigorous punishment. We are children, but we are very cruel children, we sport with two things which ought to be held the most sacred, the life and the honour of our fellow-creatures. We have seen a celebrated physician of Paris, M. Bordeu publicly

accused in printed memorials, of having stolen, ten years before, a gold watch and snuff-box from a patient whom he was accompanying to Barèges, and who died by the way. This accusation was made by one of his brethren, by name Bouvard, and the faculty of medicine, who, if the crime had been etablished, ought, for the honour of their body to have endeavoured to prevent its being made public, have, on the contrary, neglected nothing to render it as public as possible. At present, it appears that the great crimes of this physician are, that he does not entertain a very high opinion of the scientific knowledge of his brethren, and that he has much too large a portion to please them, of the practice at Paris. The affair, at least of the watch and snuff-box has been cleared up to the complete and honourable justification of the accused. But far from the defamer having been punished with proper severity, Bordeu has not even been publicly absolved, and as he is clearly proved not to have stolen the watch and the snuff-box, he is now accused of having secreted the money which was in the dead man's pocket. Such accumulated meanness and infamy makes one tremble. I do not know Bordeu, I never even saw him, but I ask whether any citizen whatever, exercising a profession allowed and established in the state, ought to be lightly suspected of a vile and infamous action, and whether the defamer, who is more infamous than the robber, ought to escape for merely saying; "I heard it was so, and am glad

" to find I was in an error." There is not a man of honour existing who has not reason to tremble, if the mean and base are to be permitted with impunity, to accuse a man upon vague assertions, made by some of the very lowest among the people, of a thing assumed to have been done ten years before. If calumny may employ unpunished such arms against the innocent, where is he who will dare in future to undertake the charge of a dying man. Thus the performance of a duty sacred among all the nations in the world, will become among us the means of destroying an innocent man, or at least of loading him with the most hateful suspicions. For, let me ask how, supposing two or three of the witnesses necessary to clear our physician's fame had died in the interval, and this was very likely to be the case,—I must ask, I say, how he was then to answer his accusers. I ask whether among a polished nation, Bordeu could be absolved without Bouvard being, according to all the rules of equity sent to the galleys. Till the first be convicted of the crime with which he is charged, I maintain that his cause is that of every honest man; that public honesty and decorum ought to plead for every citizen attacked in such a manner. But, to the shame of the national spirit, or perhaps of human nature, it must be acknowledged that a man is no sooner accused than the greater part of the public, without any knowledge of the cause, without any particular interest, ranges itself on the side of the accuser; and if the

accused succeeds at length, with infinite trouble, in clearing his fair fame, the public, weary of the matter, feels no longer a sufficient interest in it to be indignant with the wretch who would have ruined innocence. "You do well, O Parisians!" Demosthenes would have said, "always to add "force to the breath of envy, to encourage the "voice of malignity, and to refuse all justice to "the calumniated. From the manner in which "you honour genius, in which you protect merit, "they may well be supposed to be equally odious "to you. Inconsistent and frivolous people who "have a passion for glory, yet who shew no favour "and indulgence but to folly, your glory never "can be lasting while every man who dares to "think is delivered over to the fury of hypocrisy "and fanaticism, and while the life and honour of "thy citizens are in the power of vile and in-"famous slanderers."

I am going to give you some account of a conversation which I had a few days ago with a Marchioness, a very clever woman, on the subject of a novel which has just appeared, under the title of *Memoirs of the Baroness de Blemont, published by the Marchioness of Saint-Aubin.* We have at present only five parts of these memoirs; in these the story has made very little progress, since the heroine meets at every moment with persons who relate their adventures, which prevents her relating her own. But Madame de Saint-Aubin, her his-

toriographer, promises us five more parts, in which no doubt the heroine will have her turn. This novel is also called *The Dangers of Connections*, and the following is a faithful report of what passed upon the subject.

The Marchioness.—Well, Sir, so we are not to hope that you will read the Memoirs of Madame de Blemont?

Myself.—Indeed, Madam, I have not courage enough to be always reading bad books. Among a thousand other inconveniences attending it, be assured that one cannot after awhile avoid being infected with the corrupt stile which reigns in our present productions. Is it not true that no one can with impunity pass their lives in bad company?

The Marchioness.—Aye there you are.—You philosophers are so extremely difficult.

Myself.—Since I must unite my cause with theirs I will intreat you to point out to me any good work that has appeared within the last fifteen years of which the philosophers have not been the great eulogists, the most zealous partisans.

The Marchioness.—I do not reproach you with decrying good books; I only reproach you with not having indulgence enough for others.

Myself.—For others!—that is to say for the bad ones?

The Marchioness.—The e is then no medium between these two extremes.

Myself.—Pardon me; there are books which are neither good nor bad. But if there be some ex-

cellent ones, why lose our time in reading what are not so?—Does life appear to you so long.

The Marchioness.—You will not believe me. I tell you Madame de Blemont's novel has amused me much. Nothing can be more interesting than the story of the nun which occupies nearly a volume.

Myself.—Well, Madam, I have read that story, and, to speak in the language of Madame de Saint Aubin, it wholly absorbed me.

The Marchioness.—Come, come, my good sir, no sneers.

Myself.—But if your women were to say to you, "Madam, we cannot at our ages sit up till three o'clock in the morning, to attend your going to bed at a time when you ought rather to be rising, —we are afraid of our healths being injured—

The Marchioness.—No more—you are quite insupportable.

Myself. Come then we will wave the question of style. I wish with all my heart I could soften the woes of the poor nun, but on my conscience—

The Marchioness. What? have you a heart so hard as to be able to read, without being dissolved in tears, the history of an innocent young woman who finds herself, when she had not the least suspicion, under the tuition of an abandoned wretch; who is afterwards dragged to a frightful prison, and only gets out of it to throw herself into the arms of a lover who renders her unhappy in spite of himself?—Ah! in this hardness of heart I do not recognize you.

Myself—Would to heaven that our writers made me yawn less and weep more;—But in good truth I cannot reconcile myself to the absurdity and falsehood of their fictions. These poor gentry are persuaded that nothing more is requisite to shew a fertile imagination and to make an interesting novel, than to accumulate one upon the other all the most horrible and most extravagant situations possible. Your *protegé* the Chevalier de Mouhy who, before he was a courtier in the antichamber of Marshal Belle-Isle had composed fourscore and four volumes for the amusement of the northern parts of Germany and the Windward Islands,—this Chevalier, Madam, will tell you that Voltaire has perhaps some superiority over him in regard to style, but that there is not an author in all France who has an equal imagination with himself.

The Marchioness.—And indeed if he were not so silly he has a sufficiency.

Myself.—You are in the right; I have no other complaints to bring against our authors than the want of wit and talents. If they could but add to their other qualities these two, I do not doubt that they would produce things really astonishing. Do you believe, Madam, that the head of an ancient Greek is necessary to invent situations extremely romantic?—The man of genius has in this respect little superiority over the ordinary man; but it is the manner in which a situation is managed that shews real genius. If one strong situation does not suffice for a poet to produce the greatest

effects; if he must have such situations by the dozen crouding upon the back of each other, and each more terrible than the other, I should conclude him a very poor creature who wanted to conceal the poverty of his head under a heap of terrible incidents. Such a writer could never find the way to my heart. I will ask how it is that your nun gets into a bad house?—she is led into it by a chain of events utterly devoid of common sense. It is then impossible for me to interest myself in a situation wholly improbable. If I could however pass over this unpardonable sin, examine, I intreat, how a situation is managed, and then say whether it be possible for it to affect any one. The question here is of a very terrible situation; an innocent and virtuous young woman, without experience, without assistance, is in a bad house;—and what results from it? that the eyes of the Marchioness are for a few moments moistened with tears.—Madam, if her danger does not make every hair on your head stand erect, if it do not make every muscle quiver with anxiety, the nun and her historian had better both be drowned together.

The Marchioness.—So that my head-dress must be deranged five or six times in the day!—How think you the patience of my waiting-woman would stand this?

Myself.—Allow me, at least, that their anger would do your author great honour. For the rest, think of your injustice; you permit yourself to

speak the language of Madame de Blemont, but I—

The Marchioness.—Go, get you gone.

Myself.—I remember that when I found Clarissa Harlowe in a situation similar to that of your nun, it affected me to such a degree that I could not sleep. I was for a long time so agitated that had Clarissa been my sister and in real truth in such a situation, I could scarcely have felt it more strongly. There is the difference, Madam, between Richardson and Madame de Saint-Aubin.

The Marchioness.—Aye, you must always be kept in agitations, in convulsions; for my part, I prefer more tranquil sensations.

Myself.—It is true, that, when the situation is strong and terrible, I expect the author to penetrate me with terror, and to make me experience all the power of his genius; but I do not require him to throw me for ever into convulsions; on the contrary, I do not love poets who would make me tremble and shudder at every instant. A judicious author reserves the great efforts of his genius for the most pathetic pictures; it is then that he is to rend the heart, it is then that you dread taking up the book yet cannot refrain from it. These occasions are however rare, they belong exclusively to high tragedy, such as is the story of Clarissa Harlowe. Judgment is an attribute of true genius which never abandons it, and such is the genius of Richardson. The novel of Pamela is full of interest, and charms the reader, but the author has

avoided employing the same terrible resources that he has brought forward in Clarissa; Pamela often brings tears into the eyes, but they are sweet and delicious tears; Clarissa, on the contrary, makes them stream in torrents down the cheeks, and occasions mortal agony and convulsions. The dangers that the simple and innocent Pamela runs create a mild species of terror; but in the misfortunes of Clarissa terror assumes a character tragic in the highest degree.

The Marchioness.—So that the English are wholly victors over us in the contest of genius.

Myself.—Hold! by no means!—In matters of genius and literature we have yet many who can fully enter the lists against them. Wait only till they are dead and then you will see how much they will be our pride and our boast.

The Marchioness.—Merit must then among us be laid low in the tomb before it can obtain justice?

Myself.—Yes, and this is not a particular reflection upon France, it is the history of human nature. In novel writing, however, I think the English have left us far behind them. Perhaps I shall degrade myself in your estimation, but I must own that I consider the novel of *Amelia*, which was translated about six months ago, far beyond the greater part of our French Novels.

The Marchioness.—You speak of Fielding's novel, arranged by Madam Riccoboni?

Myself.—Not of Madam Riccoboni's free and elegant translation, but of the bad literal translation published last summer, where nothing is retrenched or altered; it entertained me very much. Nobody could read it, the women loaded it with censure, but I never could change my opinion. It is that the personages of this novel are real men and women, such as we see and know them every where; this is what delights me. They have nothing of that false varnish with which in France we illuminate all the personages of our novels and dramas. Booth is not indeed a man of a very superior description, but more true talent is required to give a faithful picture of such a man taken from the common ordinary walks of life, than to paint persons whom no one ever saw, who are merely creatures of our own imagination. I have all possible respect for the talents of Madam Riccoboni, but indeed I must think that she has spoiled *Amelia.*

The Marchioness.—Let her then give us something of her own, which shall resemble *My Lady Matesby.*

Myself.—And of all things let her not tell us that she thinks the novel of *Amelia* bad, since that will give me a very ill opinion of her taste and judgment. *My Lady Catesby* is pretty, I allow, but there are twenty passages in *Amelia* which I had much rather have written than a hundred *Lady Catesby*'s. Read, for instance, the

conversation between Doctor Harrison and Colonel James, upon duelling, which Madam Riccoboni has entirely spoilt in her imitation. Read it in the bad literal translation, and you will find the difference that there is between a man of genius who knows how to make the personages he introduces speak, and one who makes only an emphatic dissertation, like the author of *La Nouvelle Heloise*, dogmatizing himself upon the subject, instead of giving us the probable sentiments of the speakers. It is that, asking pardon of Madame Riccoboni, Fielding has genius, and Rousseau is only a writer.

The Marchioness.—Oh, I am very ready to yield up the affected Julia and her pedant of a tutor, you know I cannot endure them; but do not think of overpowering me with your English works. Is not Sir Charles Grandison as dogmatical as Jean Jacques? has he not all the quackery with which you reproach our heroes of romance and of the drama?

Myself.—If I were tempted to abandon Sir Charles Grandison to you, I should still say that here it is not the author who dogmatizes, he only makes his hero do so, and that is a very different thing. Richardson in his novel of Sir Charles Grandison writes twenty different styles, but in the *Nouvelle Heloise* all the characters talk in the same strain, in the emphatic language of Rousseau. Now the essential thing in these sort of works, is, that the author should never appear. Whatever may be his talents, if he be always reminding me of him-

self, I must be dissatisfied with him. I am going to give you, Madam, a great proof of my particularity. The novel of Sir Charles Grandison like every thing done by Richardson, abounds with sublime strokes, but I am not satisfied with the character of Sir Charles himself.

The Marchioness.—Oh you charm me!

Myself.—It is not that I think, such a personage is not to be found in nature, but I would have had somewhat of a more melancholy character given to it. He does not appear to me too perfect, as some people think, but he talks too much, even makes long dissertations, and I would have him a man of few words, taciturn, always acting, seldom speaking. In this manner, he would have had a character more interesting, more true, and all that preaching which shocks you would have been avoided. The more grand and noble a man is in his actions, the more simple he ought to be in his conversation and manners. Then I cannot endure that every thing should succeed exactly according to his wishes; little things, as well as great, every thing that he undertakes succeeds; this is against all experience in real life. You know better than myself, Madam, how little real good is produced even by the best actions; that it is not a very easy thing to do good to mankind, and that their unreasonableness and malignity often disconcert the best conceived projects for their advantage.

The Marchioness. — But, even though we succeed but one time in twenty, should we not always endeavour to do good?

Myself.—Even though we were never to succeed. But when you cannot succeed above one time out of twenty, I cannot bear that Sir Charles Grandison should be always successful.

The Marchioness.—Well, I find you much less subject to being besotted to things than I supposed, and I believe I shall begin to place confidence in you; but, for my sake, do endeavour to like the *Memoirs of Madame de Blémont.*

Myself.—In conscience, Madam, I have found one fine thing.

The Marchioness. — How? You have been talking to me for an hour, and not yet mentioned it!—Indeed you are quite insupportable. But what is it?

Myself.—The title, Madam, the title: *The Danger of Connections.* Oh, the fine title, the fine subject!

The Marchioness.—I suspected so; but hold your tongue, I can make nothing of you. *(Smiling.)* And why not such a title?—In the passing times an excellent treatise might be written upon the danger of political connections.

Myself.—I do not concern myself about politics, but do you not think the subject fine for a novel?

The Marchioness.—Or for a comedy.

Myself.—You are in the right. The comedy shall be put into the hands of Diderot, and the novel into those of Richardson.

The Marchioness.—I have only two objections to such an arrangement, that the one no longer writes, and the other is dead.

Myself.—I have no third to propose. But, confess, Madam, that the *Danger of Connections* is fine; with only a little experience in life one cannot but see immediately how fertile and how profound is such a subject. I mean not here to include only connections with the wicked, and the misfortunes that may result from them; this manner of treating the subject should be left to ordinary writers: but have you never remarked, that a sort of fatality seems sometimes to attach itself to connections among the most virtuous persons, and that they produce misfortunes no less unforeseen than inevitable. It is even very possible that the purest virtue may conduct innocence, unintentionally, from precipice to precipice, so as to terminate, at length, in its utter ruin.

The Marchioness.—This is indeed the most grievous of all ideas.

Myself.—We are all subjected to the invisible hand of fate. Have we our choice in any thing? Are we not obliged every one of us to obey the particular impulsions which we receive? A prodigious combination of chances and circumstances, not one of which was in my power, has formed my connections. Did it depend on myself

that I should or should not meet with such or such a person, and is not every thing that has befallen me, in consequence of this meeting, the necessary result of things over which I had myself no controul. Let any one shew me, if they can, how the young Lavaysse could have avoided being at that supper, which was the commencement of all the misfortunes of the poor Calas family.

The Marchioness.—Oh, do not advert to that deplorable catastrophe!—You make me feel indeed that a different pen from that of Madame de Saint-Aubin was required to treat such a subject as the *Danger of Connections.* However, let me intreat of you not to speak of it slightingly to your philosophers; they will not read the work and it may then succeed.

Myself.—Would not any one who heard you, Madam, suppose that the fate of new books depends entirely on the caprice of certain philosophers. On this point, I do not believe in necessity. I feel, undoubtedly, that a bad writer must necessarily make bad books; but I know of no fatality that can prevent a good book being good. For the rest, I give you my word that, in quitting you, I will think no more of Madame de Blémont, or her adventures, and that it will cost me no trouble to forget them.

The Marchioness.—You are an absolute monster!

Here a *valet-de-chambre* came in, with Madame de Saint-Aubin's compliments, that she had

sent twenty more copies of the *Danger of Connections*, and hoped that her friend would sell them as she had been so good as to sell the others,

Myself (smiling.)—Why did you not give me a hint of this sooner, Madam ?

The Marchioness (to her servant, smiling).—Blockhead ! who taught you to deliver your messages aloud.

Myself.—Madam, I here recognize you, and recal what I have said. If our philosophers do not read the *Danger of Connections* they shall at least purchase the work, and I will answer for their not speaking ill of it. I desire to have ten of these copies myself, and I will send them to the north of Germany, as I do not traffic to the south.

The Marchioness.—Now do I indeed pardon all your slights, for I find that your heart is excellent. Will it not be better that we have each of us a crown or two less, and that Madame de Saint-Aubin should get something for her work.

Myself.—Undoubtedly. And if you will assist me in selling a *Dissertation upon Satire* you will do two good actions instead of one; for you must know that I too have my Saint-Aubins. One of them has translated this Dissertation from the Italian of a certain M. Romolini. I might say to you, what may be said of almost all bad books, that there are good things in it; but between ourselves I must own that it is very dull and fatiguing. This does not prevent my wishing to sell a great many for my Saint-Aubin.

The Marchioness.—Send me some—send me some, and we'll endeavour to say a word or two in its favour.

In consequence of the above conversation I here give notice that people may buy, if they would be charitable, and throw into the fire if they would be just, several new novels which have appeared within a very short time; to wit:

The Successes of a Coxcomb, in two parts.

The Walks and Recontres in the Park at Versailles, in two parts.

As my Marchioness has no copies of the above two works to sell for the benefit of their authors, she acknowledges that they are most complete nonsense.

The Flying Men, or the Adventures of Peter Wilkins, in three volumes with plates, translated from the English. I know not whether this novel be well translated; it is a poor imitation of that admirable work *Gulliver's Travels,* by Swift.

Evenings in the Country, or a Collection of short, amusing, and interesting Stories, in two parts. This is the sequel of a rhapsody, the beginning of which appeared in 1760. The author pretends that the public received his work with great indulgence, and if perfect neglect may be called so, he has certainly sufficient reason to be grateful.

Louis Racine, son to the great Racine, is just dead at a very advanced age. He was a member of the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres;

he wrote a poem upon *Religion*, and another upon *Grace*; the latter acquired him the nickname of *Racine the Grace*. He was a man of a very narrow mind; a Jansenist, and so bigotted that he never would go to the theatre, even when his father's tragedies were performed. Not Athalia itself was excepted from this rule, because it was recited by profane mouths. M. de Voltaire said of him: "Louis Racine may do all he can, but his father "will always be a very great man."

We have lost another celebrated writer. M. de Marivaux of the French Academy died a few days ago at the advanced age of seventy-six. He was the author of some execrable tragedies, of a great number of comedies, and of some novels which enjoy a considerable reputation. His *Mariane* and his *Paysan Parvenu*, are much celebrated. He had a manner of writing, peculiar to himself, easy to be recognized, and very minute, not wanting in talent, nor occasionally in truth, but written in a bad and often false taste. Marivaux had a considerable reputation in England, and if it be true that his novels were the model followed by Richardson and by Fielding, we may say that for the first time a bad original has given occasion to admirable copies. He had among us a fate similar to that of a pretty woman; that is to say, a very brilliant spring, and a most neglected and melancholy autumn and winter. The vigorous breath of philosophy has within the last fifteen years overthrown

all those reputations which were supported only on reeds. Marivaux was an honest man, but of a character which readily took offence, consequently it was no easy thing to keep upon good terms with him; he suspected some trick in every thing that was said; the most innocent words wounded him, and he was always ready to suppose that people sought to mortify him. This rendered him unhappy within himself, and his society almost insupportable to others.

March, 1763.

Edmund Bouchardon, the illustrious statuary, died at Paris the twenty-seventh of July, 1762; he was born at Chaumont in Bassigni, in the month of November, 1698. His father, a very moderate architect and sculptor, spared no pains to have this son well instructed. His first glances, as a child, fell upon the Laocoon, upon the Venus de Medicis, and upon the Gladiator, for these figures are in the work rooms of the poorest, as well as of the most distinguished artists, as Homer and Virgil are equally in the libraries of a Voltaire and a Freron. Fine living models are rare in every country, but particularly among us, where the feet are confined by the make of our shoes, where the knee is spoiled by the garter, and where the shoulders are confined by tight bandages. Bouchardon's father sought out the finest models for him, sparing no expense to attain them.

Pliny says, of Apelles, that he never passed a

day without his pencil in his hand, and the history of sculpture will bear a similar kind of testimony respecting Bouchardon. No one was ever a more thorough master of the art of drawing. He could with a single uninterrupted stroke, sketch a figure from head to foot, and even from the extremity of the foot to the top of the head, in any position whatever, without deviating in the slightest degree from the correctness of the drawing, and from the truth of the contours and proportions.

If the question be only of making pins, a man must be an enthusiast in his art, in order to excel in it. Bouchardon was a true enthusiast. He came to Paris, where he entered himself as a pupil under the younger Coustou. The master was surprised at the extreme correctness of drawing that he found in his pupil, but he was not in the case of being able to say of him as the Greek artist said of his pupil *Nil salit Arcadico juveni.* He resembled altogether in his character, the noble and astonishing animal which served him as a model in executing his equestrian statue of Louis the fifteenth; he was mild when in repose, haughty, noble, full of fire and life when in action; he contested for and obtained the prize at the Academy and was sent to Rome.

When any one has genius it is there that he feels it; it is awakened in the midst of ruins. It appears to me that magnificent ruins strike much more forcibly than monuments which are entire and well preserved; the hand of time has sown

among the moss with which they are covered, a croud of grand ideas, of mild and melancholy sentiments. I admire the entire building, the ruin fills me with a sort of sublime awe, my heart is melted, my imagination is in full play; I recur to the people who have produced these wonders, but they alas have long been no more, *et in lenocinio commendationis dolor est manus, cum id ageret, extinctæ.* Bouchardon remained ten years in Italy, and even obtained distinction among this jealous people to such a degree that he was selected to execute the monument to Clement the Eleventh, and but for some very particular circumstances, the apotheosis of that pontiff, who did so much injury to France, would have proceeded from the hand of a Frenchman. On his return to France, he was employed in a great many works, which all breathe strongly a taste for nature, and for the productions of antiquity, that is to say, they are full of simplicity, of force, of grace, and of truth.

Works of sculpture demand a great deal of time, they are properly the works of the sovereign, their success depends upon him and his ministers. This reflection brings to my mind the fate of the unfortunate Puget. He had executed the Milo of Crotona, which you have seen at Versailles, and which, though standing by the side of the master-pieces of antiquity, does not seem displaced. Discontented at the moderate price offered for his work, he was going to break it with

a hammer, if his hand had not been stopped. The Great King being informed of this, said: "Let "him have what he asks, but let him not be em- "ployed any more; he is too dear a workman for "me." After this, who could venture to employ Puget?—Nobody.—Thus was the first artist in France left to starve!

Not in such a way did the city of Paris conduct itself towards Bouchardon, when he had executed his beautiful Fountain in the Street of La Grenelle; beautiful, I mean, as to the figures; but for the rest, in my opinion, below mediocrity. I cannot think that any fountain can be beautiful, as a fountain, where the distribution of the water is not made the principal feature. The city settled upon the artist an annuity for life, which was granted in a manner the most noble and the most flattering. It is by such means that great men are found to execute great undertakings.

The History of England, by David Hume, has a high reputation in Europe. This celebrated philosopher began by writing the History of the House of Stuart. Going backwards, he next published the History of the Princes of the House of Tudor, and finished by going still further back to the History of the Country from the invasion of Julius Cæsar to the time when the House of Tudor was seated on the throne. These three works form a complete History of England, in which we equally admire the wisdom, the depth, and the simplicity of the his-

torian by which it is narrated. Mr. Hume proves very forcibly by his own example that the province of writing history by right, belongs to philosophers exempt from prejudice and passion. He judges all parties, all factions, all the quarrels which have occasioned men to tear each other to pieces with unexampled impartiality; and as we generally denominate all matters of party, follies on both sides, the English philosopher commonly treats both parties equally well or ill. *The History of the House of Stuart* was translated two years ago by the Abbé Prevost, but his translation is accused of having been executed with extreme negligence. Madame Belot has just published a translation of *The History of the House of Tudor*, in two volumes quarto. This lady is the widow of an Advocate, who left her at his death with no other means of subsistence but a rent of about sixty livres a year. As it was impossible to subsist upon such a miserable pittance, she sold the property, for which she got twelve hundred livres, and this money she applied to learning English with the view to procuring herself a livelihood by translation. She has since found many friends, and the king has just granted her a pension. We have already been presented by her with some volumes of *Miscellanies* translated from the English. I most truly believe that nobody is more entitled to our interest, on the score of real merit, than Madame Belot, and I wish with all my heart that I could give all possible commendation to her

literary labours. But the inflexible law of truth to which I have adhered throughout in these pages, obliges me to acknowledge that her translation of the *House of Tudor* does not please the public; the style is reckoned cold, heavy and poor, and it is much to be feared that the more the work is examined the greater will be the faults discovered; the undertaking seems indeed in itself to be above the powers of a woman. So much previous knowledge is requisite to execute it properly, that the mere knowledge of the language from which the work is to be translated, seems almost one of the least important considerations. How many faults must a person be liable to commit, who is not deeply read in the History of England, previous to undertaking the translation of Mr. Hume's work. A woman, whose mind is capable of application, may learn philosophy and morals, may acquire some knowledge of the human heart; but the translator of Hume ought to be familiarized with all the relations and combinations that belong to civilized man; he ought to be profoundly versed in the genius of State affairs, and the hidden springs of policy in every age. This study, which demands a cool head, and which ought to be assisted by consummate experience, is perfectly in opposition to the French character; we have so few men of this stamp, that it is scarcely possible to suppose such variety of knowledge and talents in a woman, without her having given us convincing proofs of them.

April, 1763.

The request presented by the unfortunate Calas Family, was in the course of the last month examined and admitted in the King's Council of State. The Parliament of Toulouse has, in consequence, been summoned to send in a report of their proceedings in that horrible trial. The discussion of the affair will occupy much time, and it will very likely end in clearing the memory of this unhappy victim of fanaticism. But will the judges who violated all the forms of their sacred ministry, who made a fatal attack upon the public safety, by devoting an innocent man to a frightful punishment in the face of the laws,—will these judges be punished?—Will their crime, the most atrocious that can be committed against society, be suffered to pass with impunity?—on this subject no one will venture to hazard a prediction. Whatever may happen, the glory of all that is done in behalf of this unfortunate family, will for ever rest with M. de Voltaire. He dared to take up the cause of humanity, the cause of every citizen; he has called the attention of all Europe to the deplorable catastrophe; and if the judges of Calas do not go to the galleys with the Capitoul David at their head, they will at least be held up to the execration of mankind. A foreigner went lately to visit M. de Voltaire, when the patriarch said to his guest, "You see, Sir, the outcast of Kings, and the pro-"tector of persons condemned to the wheel."

M. de Voltaire has just published the second volume of his *History of Peter the Great.* This latter part of the details of so memorable a reign appears executed in a manner more worthy of the illustrious historian to whom we are indebted for it, than the former was; yet I cannot say that it rises altogether to that point of dignity which belongs to the history of a great legislator, of the founder and reformer of a vast empire. We read the work of M. de Voltaire with pleasure, but this is the very thing with which I reproach him; the *History of Peter the Great* ought to produce other effects, and leave other impressions on the mind than that of its being an agreeable book to read. What is besides much to be regretted is, that, after so great a master, no one will be found bold enough to enter upon the subject. It must then remain for ever imperfect. I can never sufficiently lament that a writer of such talents should sometimes be so much the slave of a thousand petty considerations to which his genius ought to rise superior. This often leads him, even on very important occasions, to present things to our view under an aspect so versatile, that it belongs much less to the dignity of a historian, than to the insidious eloquence of a rhetorician. We cannot exactly charge M. de Voltaire with having disguised the conduct of Peter towards his son, under false colours, but when we read what he says upon the trial and tragical end of the youth, the mind is left

in a state of uncertainty which does not permit of our forming any solid judgment on the merits of the case. M. de Voltaire must however have an opinion upon it, and the historian ought to be sufficiently honest not to conceal his sentiments on the things which he treats. This veracity can alone render history interesting, and if sometimes from private considerations, some management may be requisite, the honest man remains entirely silent, nor touches on any subject upon which he does not feel himself at liberty to write entirely without restraint. Satire, the desire of blackening a character, of imputing to another crimes not well established, often a mere taste for the marvellous, I would reprobate in a historian, no less severely than M. de Voltaire does; but to shrink from the truth, to practise improper forbearance, to be influenced by private considerations in the manner of representing things, takes from history its freedom and its dignity, and renders the historian contemptible. When we have read these two volumes from the pen of M. de Voltaire, we know the events of the reign of Peter the Great, but we do not know the character either of that extraordinary man, of the Empress Catherine his wife, or any of the personages who were the instruments in bringing about such wonderful changes in the state of the country. It will not be thus, I hope, that the great Frederick will write the history of a reign immortal in the annals of the world.

For the rest, a century which has produced three such men as Peter the Great of Russia,

Charles the Twelfth of Sweden, and Frederick William the Second of Prussia, is not an epoch barren of great Princes. But a consideration well worthy of our attention is, that Charles the Twelfth with qualities more brilliant than solid, rather a hero who astonishes, than a great King, would have changed the face of Europe, if he had not encountered in his career so extraordinary a man as Peter. On the other hand, Frederick, sublime in all his undertakings, great in every point of view, as a hero, a king, a legislator, a warrior, a philosopher,—the most extraordinary man, in short, whose name ever appeared in history—who never had opposed to him either in the cabinet or in the field, any one whose talents would bear in the slightest degree to be put into comparison with his own, produced no sensible revolution in Europe, if we except that which is a necessary consequence of the influence acquired by the glory of his reign, and the credit of his house.—So much is every thing human governed by circumstances. The conquest of Asia did not perhaps cost half the efforts to Alexander the Great, that Frederick was obliged to exert in order to resist the obstinate and repeated attacks of all the forces of Europe, between the Oder and the Elbe.

October, 1763.

You will perhaps recollect a story inserted in the life of the celebrated *Gil Blas de Santillane*, entitled the *Marriage out of Revenge*. On thi-

story the English poet, Thomson, composed a tragedy which was performed in London under the title of *Tancred* and *Sigismunda*. A prose translation of this piece was published in the French Mercury about two years ago. M. Saurin has now introduced it upon the boards of the French Theatre as *Blanch* and *Guiscardo*, a tragedy in verse, freely translated from the English. This piece was played three times in the last week, but with no great success; it is, however, to be resumed after the return of the players from Fontainebleau.

What a fine subject for a tragedy is *Blanch* and *Guiscardo*, and how easily might a man of real genius have made it one of the finest pieces of which our language could boast. How happens it then that M. Saurin's tragedy is cold and languid? it is, that the subject is above his powers, that none but a genius of the first order could have executed such an undertaking with success. If the author could not make the tears of his audience flow from the beginning to the end, if he could not rend the hearts of his spectators and send them away overwhelmed with anguish, he ought not to have ventured upon such a subject. How strong an interest should reign in this piece from the very beginning!—what a sublime character is that of Siffredi!—how affecting is the character of Blanch!—what can be more interesting than a young hero, formed, unhappily for himself, with a heart of too deep sensibility, capable of practising every other virtue except renouncing a woman whom he justly

adores. Observe that so many virtuous persons are placed in a very deplorable situation without any of them being actually to blame, without any of the manœuvres of the wicked, of those villainous souls whom our modern poets have always at their command to fill up their plot. The constable himself must be allowed a man of honour and irreproachable, though he cannot lay claim to equal virtue with the others. In the tragedy, the prince is educated without any knowledge of his own rank and situation, and this circumstance gives a deeper interest to the play than the story, since in *Gil Blas* the hero has been educated as the lawful successor to the throne. The genius of Racine, combined with the warmth and passion of the author of Zaïre, would have made this tragedy a *chef-d'ouvre*. What a pity that so fine a subject should fall into such feeble hands!

M. Saurin's style is poor and his piece is ill written; there is nothing in it of strength, of truth, of sentiment, of passion, of logic, or of pathos. When he would express the tender sentiment of love, he falls into the eclogue or the madrigal; when he would be forcible and pathetic, he is bombast: true warmth is not to be found in any part. Some passages were much applauded, as, for example, that in which Blanch, when abandoned to her griefs says, amidst the stillness of the night:

> How long the night appears to those whom grief
> Keeps watching!

The passage is fine undoubtedly, but was Blanch at that moment in a situation to utter such a sentiment? I think not. If some time after, in relating the story of her sufferings, she had made such a reflection, it would not have been out of its place. I prefer very much the passage in which Siffredi announces to his daughter the death of the king. He speaks there as a Statesman, and as a philosopher; he recalls to our minds the emptiness of human grandeur by telling us that this good king is arrived at the moment when monarchs no longer preserve any of the perogatives of their rank; when, confounded with the lowest of mortals, they remain without guards, without any protection but their virtue alone. The idea is not new, but it is affecting, and above all it is in its place; and I am never affected but with things simple in themselves and properly-timed.

The English, of whom there are crouds at Paris, assert that M. Saurin has spoiled the English tragedy very much. This seems a not unjust accusation, since the French piece is very dull and tedious, and they say that the English one is full of interest. In the latter, Blanch is in bed when Guiscardo enters her apartment during the night, and Siffredi, after the murder of his daughter, rushes into the room in his gown in all the disorder of a man who has hastily quitted his bed. Why dare we not in France imitate the truth with equal fidelity?—nothing, as it appears to me, proves more forcibly the feebleness of our pieces, and our false

ideas of the drama. If the actor knows how to throw into his features the proper expression of terror and consternation, that they ought to exhibit at that moment, the disorder of the father's dress, far from wounding the eyes of the spectators, or disposing them to laugh, would add very greatly to the effect of the scene. O sacred and affecting truth! how far are we from thee, and how much more are we disposed to deviate from thee still farther, than to draw nearer to thee.

The celebrated English actor, Garrick, was present at the first representation of this tragedy. He was at Paris for a few days, and set off the next day for Italy; at his return he proposes to stay some time with us. He has been made to give a thousand contrary opinions with regard to our Stage, every one putting into his mouth a favourable or unfavourable opinion of such an actor or such an actress, according as they were or were not favourites of the person who pretended to be reporting the censor's verdict. Garrick, however, like a wise man, gave his true opinion to a very small number of friends only, whom he found here.

The different pieces wrote by Stanislaus King of Poland, Duke of Lorraine and Bar, have just been collected and printed in four volumes, under the title of *Works of the Benevolent Philosopher*. Benevolent most certainly!—philosopher? that is as you please. His editor is certainly not a philosopher, consequently he has no right to give that

title to any one whom he chuses. He has to me very much the air of being that flat and miserable Chevalier de Solignac, who bears the title of private Secretary to his Polish Majesty. All the principal pieces in this collection have been long known to the public, a few smaller ones now appear for the first time. The work upon the *Government of Poland*, which has been before the public for twelve years, under the title of, *The free Voice of a Citizen*, occupies two volumes of the collection. King Stanislaus was also one of the first who attacked Jean Jacques Rousseau's dissertation against the sciences. But the best works of this ex-monarch are not printed, cannot be printed; they are only to be seen in traversing Lorraine. It is there that we witness with astonishment all the good done by him with his very confined means. His annual revenue amounted to no more than two millions of French livres, yet he lived with all the decorum of royalty, and had always money to distribute for benevolent purposes; no monument that could be erected to him would be so lasting as the remembrance of his good deeds. The more we reflect, the more deeply we feel how much œconomy is the first of virtues in a king, and the science of applying money in the most useful manner, the most useful that a sovereign can possess. There was nothing with which Stanislaus could justly be reproached excepting having suffered the priests, and above all, the Jesuits to obtain too great an ascendancy over him. According to their usual custom they turned

the good prince's benevolence to the advantage of superstition, and directed it against the progress of reason.

The Letters written by Lady Mary Wortley Montague, during her travels in Europe, Asia and Africa, have been translated and printed in Holland. Two editions are given, one published at Amsterdam, the other at Rotterdam; the latter is reported to be the best. You know that Lady Mary accompanied her husband, on his embassy to Constantinople, and the letters which form this collection, were written by her, during her absence, to her friends in England. It was she who, at her return from Turkey, established inoculation in England.

The English consider these letters, in their original language, as models of style and elegance; under the pen of the Dutch translators not the slightest trace of this merit remains. They are notwithstanding very interesting, and her manner of considering objects is both original and entertaining. The work does not meet with great applause among us, but that may be the fault of those who judge it. I have often remarked that the autumn is an unfavourable season for works to come out at Paris. As the town is at that time more empty than at any other, the fools who remain pass over excellent works without having any suspicion of their worth, not having any one to give them their cue. But besides this some strokes which have

escaped from the pen of the fair authoress against France, and particularly against the French ladies, have prejudiced this fair part of the judges against her; and no one can hope to succeed here who has not the voices of the ladies in their favour. Our belles could not see that it was pardonable in one who had been just contemplating the beautiful Circassians, and the lovely women of Chios, not to find the Parisian fair altogether so handsome as the Orientals, and to be shocked with the plaisters of rouge that they put upon their cheeks. Rousseau says, somewhere, that the Parisian ladies have all the bold and masculine air of grenadiers. This is no less false than impertinent, yet the ladies could pardon him, though they cannot pardon Lady Mary Wortley Montague. It is that an unpalatable truth is much less easily pardoned, than a downright slander. Be this as it may, Lady Mary is a woman of great talents and merit, and her letters will afford the reader much entertainment, if he can in any sort digest the clumsiness of the translator.

Madame de Liré, who, as wife to the late M. Desalleurs, has also lived at Constantinople, attacks Lady Mary's veracity. But to have been at Constantinople is not in itself alone sufficient to enable any one to judge her work in this point of view; a person must have had equal talents, an equally philosophical mind, equal taste and discernment, equal ardour in search of information, before he can be qualified to invalidate our fair authoress's testimony. She is reproached with

having given a picture of the manners of Vienna which does not in the least resemble them; but who does not feel that Austrian gallantry must have had a very different character under the gay and fortunate Charles the Sixth, from what it assumed during the reign of the severe and pious Maria Theresa.

November, 1763.

The name of the Earl of Warwick is one of the most celebrated in the fifteenth century. He played one of the greatest parts in the troubles between the Houses of York and Lancaster, which desolated England for so long a time. Warwick was the soul of the White-rose or York party, while Queen Margaret of Anjou, wife to King Henry the Sixth, was at the head of the Red-rose or Lancastrian party. Henry was weak and indolent in mind, and of a constitution so sickly that it often rendered him incapable of thinking or acting. This Prince who had so little to recommend him as a sovereign, and who became so celebrated for his misfortunes, might probably have reigned peaceably all his life under the tuition of his uncles, and transmitted his throne, quietly, to his children, had he been joined to a wife well-suited to him; that is to say, equally contemptible with respect to talents and sentiment. But Margaret, to great beauty of person, joined the soul of a hero. Henry had espoused her contrary to his interests,

and in spite of the Duke of Gloucester his uncle and minister.

Margaret was not formed to live idly upon the throne; she soon gained a complete ascendancy over the mind of her weak husband, and governing him entirely, extended her views, and was ambitious of equally governing the State. To effect this, it was necessary that the Duke of Gloucester should be removed out of the way, and she procured him to be not only disgraced but assassinated. This crime has been made a subject of great reproach to her, but it was less her individual guilt than the guilt of the age. The triumph of great souls is to be placed in difficult situations, it is there that all their genius is displayed, but it is the greatest of all misfortunes to ordinary minds. It may sound well for a weak prince to be governed by a heroine, but his history is commonly only a series of faults and disasters. The genius of Margaret could not avert the misfortunes to which her husband was doomed. It was already a great one that she, in order to reign, was obliged to destroy a minister of the blood royal, one who was as dear to the people as she, from being a Princess of the Blood of France, was odious to them.

Margaret, after this catastrophe, did not govern with sufficient address or good fortune to conciliate the popular favour. On the contrary, the losses that the English experienced in the pro-

vinces which they possessed in France, incensed the people more and more, and the queen was at length under the necessity of sacrificing her principal minister and favourite, the Duke of Suffolk, to the public hatred. The most important efforts of her policy were then directed to preventing the Duke of York's coming forward in any conspicuous character. The house of York was of an elder branch of the royal family to the house of Lancaster, and had consequently an incontestable right to the throne; the Duke had been deprived of it by misfortunes alone. All that the queen did to prevent the house of York becoming dangerous to her and Henry, only served to put arms into their hands, and a civil war soon broke out. Henry was taken prisoner by the Earl of Warwick in a battle where Margaret fought by his side; and although this Princess's courage remained unshaken, and that she had even the happiness of conquering the Duke of York in another battle, where the Duke himself and one of his sons were killed, she could not triumph over the genius of Warwick.

History paints this celebrated man as full of courage, artifice and pride, as of a courageous spirit, and as fertile in resources. Master of London, he had the young son of the Duke of York proclaimed king by the title of Edward the Fourth. The feeble Henry was declared unworthy of the throne, and was shut up in the Tower, while the intrepid Margaret, his wife, crossed the seas to seek assistance in France. Edward was, however,

no sooner seated on the throne, than he proved ungrateful. Warwick, who had been a second father to him, to whom he owed the crown, went over to France to negociate a marriage between his young sovereign and a sister of the wife of Louis the Eleventh King of France. The treaty of alliance was nearly concluded, when Edward saw the Lady Elizabeth Woodville, and becoming enamoured of her charms, married her privately. He afterwards declared her queen of England without consulting Warwick.

This latter was not a man patiently to support such an indignity, and he soon became the irreconcileable enemy of the King whom he himself had given to England. Both parties had recourse to arms, and the war was renewed. Edward was soon deprived of his newly-acquired throne, and was driven out of the kingdom; while the unfortunate Henry was released from the Tower and replaced on the throne. But Warwick did not serve the house of Lancaster with the same good fortune that he had served the house of York. Edward soon found means to return to England, and Henry was scarcely restored before he was shut up anew in the Tower. This happened at the very moment when Margaret returned to England with her son, intending to take advantage of her happy change of fortune; and Warwick about the same time lost his life in a battle, the event of which secured the peaceable possession of the throne to Edward. Margaret had only the additional affliction of seeing

the author of all her misfortunes, the most powerful man of his age, cease to be formidable from the moment that he ceased to be her enemy. She herself lost another battle soon after, when her son was taken prisoner and murdered. Henry was then assassinated in the Tower, and Margaret was sent back to France, not without a ransom for her life being required of Louis the Eleventh.

It was out of these materials that the Abbé Prévost compiled his historical romance, entitled *Margaret of Anjou*, and from both M. de La-Harpe has taken his tragedy of the *Earl of Warwick*, recently performed with great applause at the French Theatre. Cahusac had, about thirty years before, attempted to dramatise this subject; but the said Cahusac was one of the worst poets of our times. A mortal wound was given to his piece at the very outset; the actor, to whose lot it fell to recite the following line,

Let England be transported to the midst of France,

unfortunately dwelt upon it with particular emphasis, which occasioned one of the wits in the pit to cry out, *make room for England, make room for England.* This was enough, it was impossible for the piece to proceed amidst the clamour that was raised, and the curtain was dropped without its being finished.

M. de La Harpe has been more fortunate. This poet was hitherto known only by some fugitive pieces; but the distinction which has

attended his first essay in the drama, proves him capable of moving in a much higher sphere; we have only to hope that his subsequent success may answer the expectations now raised of him. In the tragedy of the *Earl of Warwick* he has only taken the general outline and the names of the personages from history. A part of the plot and some of the situations are borrowed from the Abbé Prevost's romance, and are contrary to the historical facts; this is a pity, since the facts are too well known to admit of our readily accustoming ourselves to seeing them altered. This licence, besides, takes away from the characters their individuality, and alters the manners and characteristic features of the age, things which are of the highest value in a dramatic work; to which such extreme attention was paid by the ancients, and which are so extremely neglected by the moderns. Of whatever nation the heroes are with whom we are now presented, whether they be Greeks, or Romans, French, English, or Mussulmans—whether they belonged to a polished and enlightened, or to a barbarous age, they are all perfect resemblances the one of the other. Britannicus, Titus, Orosman, the Duke de Foix, have all the same character of generosity, they all breathe the same noble sentiments; the Jew Mathan in Athalia, and the Roman Narcissus in Brittannicus, display the same species of wickedness and perfidy. They all resemble their author, that is to say, the model which he has formed in his own head of a hero or a villain,

but they have no resemblance to the personages of the age and nation in which they are supposed to have lived; they have nothing of their manners, of their conversation, they are all, in short, Frenchmen. This, without all doubt, is the principal reason why young people are so much pleased with tragedy: at that age, the first sentiments of passion delight the soul, while persons of a more matured taste require a truth and a strength of manners which we seek in vain in modern tragedies. I would not therefore make that a particular objection to M. de La Harpe, which is in fact the fault of his age. He has arranged and conducted the materials and incidents of his piece according to established custom, and in pardoning this licence we must acknowledge that he shews himself indisputably a person of very considerable talents.

The time which he has chosen for his piece is that when Warwick is negociating, in France, the marriage of young Edward with the queen of France's sister, and when Edward, smitten to the soul by the lovely Elizabeth Woodville, determines to break the treaty concluded by his minister and benefactor. But this is the least afflictive part of the outrage which, according to the Abbé Prevost's romance, Warwick receives from his new king. Although married, he has been long passionately in love with Elizabeth, and Edward does him a mortal injury in thus depriving him of the heart of his mistress. The most uncontroulable of all passions renders him guilty of the blackest ingra-

titude towards the man who placed the crown upon his head. But here the poet, in choosing this moment for the time of his drama, has not thought fit to adhere entirely to the romance writer as to the incidents attending upon the rivalship between the king-maker and the king. He supposes Warwick to be unmarried, and to be a suitor for the hand of Elizabeth. Henry the Sixth was then confined in the Tower, according to history, and according to the poet, Margaret of Anjou with her son were at the court of Edward, where they were treated with great respect, though detained in some sort as prisoners. This circumstance is false; Margaret was in France when Warwick was there negociating the king's marriage. Neither the manners of the age, nor good policy, would have permitted Edward to leave a woman, so formidable, at liberty in the midst of his court. The fact is, that she was not taken prisoner till after the death of Warwick in the battle which terminated this fatal and sanguinary contest.

The principal defects of the tragedy are the want of interest, of sentiment, and of vigour. Although the subject be very affecting, M. de La Harpe does not know how to make his audience weep; but there is a great deal of warmth in the details, great judgment in the conduct of the piece, great elevation in the stile and characters. The plot never lingers, and it is free from any obscurity. If the action may seem for a moment suspended while Warwick is in prison, yet the poet

keeps up the interest by the warmth which reigns throughout the fourth act. Possibly this may be less the merit of the poet than of the actors; where the merit is most due will appear when we come to read the play. There is not a scene in the whole piece where some matter for particular commendation, and warm commendation is not presented; yet at the same time it must be confessed, that there is scarcely a scene in which we do not also find something defective, especially with regard to the exact length to which it ought to be extended or compressed. The characters are well conceived, but not equally well developed, and the author is not always happy in the choice of those strokes by which he designs particularly to mark them. The weakest character in the piece is that of Elizabeth, but it was necessary to give her a great deal of sentiment, and this is the very part in which M. de la Harpe fails the most. I do not think, on the whole, that the Earl of Warwick will have a great run, yet it is very far from a contemptible work. Considered as a first essay in dramatic writing, it gives reason to hope much in future from the author's talents.

December, 1763.

True prodigies are so rare that we may very well boast much of them when we are really presented with one. The master of a choir, at Salzbourg, by name Mozart, is just arrived at Paris, with two children, the prettiest creatures in the world.

His daughter, who is only eleven years of age, plays on the harpsichord divinely; she executes the most difficult pieces with a precision that is perfectly astonishing. Her brother, who will not be seven years old till next February, is a yet more extraordinary phænomenon; so extraordinary that we scarcely know how to believe what we see with our own eyes, and hear with our own ears. Not only does he execute the most difficult passages with the utmost precision, but the astonishing thing is, to hear him play, from his own head, for an hour together, abandoning himself to all the inspirations of his genius, producing a thousand ideas that enchant, which succeed the one to the other with the utmost taste, and the most exquisite harmony, perfectly free from all confusion. The most consummate master of the science could not shew more skill in his modulations, which he conducts by ways the least known yet always exact. He reads with the utmost readiness any music presented to him, and writes and composes with wonderful facility, without coming near the instrument to seek his accords. I wrote down a minuet, and desired him to put the base to it; he took the pen and did so immediately, without ever touching the harpsichord. Another thing to which I was a witness, and which seems almost incomprehensible, is this:—A lady asked him, the other day, whether he could, by his ear alone, without seeing the music, accompany an Italian Cavatina, which she knew by heart, and she be-

gan to sing it. The child tried a base, which he found not perfectly exact, because of the impossibility of preparing, beforehand, the accompaniment of a song which he did not know; but when the air was finished, he requested the lady to sing it again, and in this second essay, he not only played the air through perfectly with his right hand, but he added the base with his left, without the least hesitation or embarrassment. After this, he begged the lady ten times over to sing the air again, and every time varied the character of the accompaniment; he would probably have gone on to twenty times had he not been desired to stop. I do not despair of having my head turned by this child, if I hear him often; he makes me conceive very well that it is difficult to preserve ourselves from madness in witnessing prodigies. These two extraordinary children have excited the warmest admiration in every one who has seen and heard them. The Emperor, and the Empress Queen, loaded them with kindness, and they received an equally warm reception at the Courts of Munich and of Manheim. It is a pity that music is so very little understood in this country. The father proposes going from hence to England, and he afterwards means to carry his children to the lower parts of Germany.

We have just received, from Geneva, some copies of a work, entitled: *Letters written from the Country*. Several burgesses and citizens of

that republic having made various representations to the Council, with regard to its proceedings against Jean Jacques Rousseau, people's heads began to be so heated upon the subject that great apprehensions were entertained for the public tranquillity and, M. Tronchin published these *Letters from the Country* in hopes of quieting people's minds; his end has been fully answered. He descants, as a simple citizen, on the difficulties which have occurred, and every one, after reading his work, acknowledges that the Council were in the right. This is perhaps, the first example that can be cited of reason obtaining an empire over heads which had once been heated by faction and cabal. M. Tronchin is brother to the physician, and a man of an excellent understanding. Had he been born in England, he would, most assuredly, have made a conspicuous figure in the House of Commons. But I will refer to a celebrated magistrate, in France, the charge of giving you an idea of these letters.

LETTER *from* M. *de* MONCLAR, *Attorney-General, to the Parliament at* AIX, *to the* DUKE DE VILLARS, *Governor of* PROVENCE.

I CANNOT, Sir, return you too many thanks for the copy you were pleased to send me of the *Letters written from the Country*, and only request to be allowed not to return it. I have had so much pleasure in the perusal of this work, that I must hope to be pardoned a theft so openly avow-

ed nor will it be difficult for you to procure another copy from Geneva. In my opinion, nothing was ever more replete with solid sense and judgment than these letters. The reasoning is perfectly clear and just, and the deductions are admirable. The fifth letter is a most valuable treatise upon public and political rights, and deserves to be placed by the side of the best things we have in this way. But what enchants me above all, is the spirit of decency and moderation which reigns throughout; never could the prejudiced reader have had a finer opening presented to him to return to reason without feeling his *amour-propre* too much mortified. It is indeed a master piece in its suitableness to times and circumstances; it might well be remarked, that the author fears to abuse the empire which eloquence has over the minds of the citizens in a free state. He does not aim at the subduing those minds, or at leading them astray, his eloquence is mild and modest in its form, even when most triumphant as to its essence; it is most truly that of a statesman in a republic. He does not assume the tone of victory even when he triumphs by the weight of evidence; he is insinuating without aiming at seduction, yet his gentleness is not affected; it appears the effect of sentiment, not the work of art, though it would be impossible for the most consummate art to do better. The author does not appear occupied with himself, nor wedded even to the opinions which are the most clearly demonstrated;

he is occupied only with the public good, he appears to love nothing but truth and the laws; he respects his fellow-citizens, whom he endeavours to undeceive without having the air of seeking to domineer over their understandings. There is in his country a great fund of good sense and good feeling. I am not surprised at the great effect produced by this work, it scarcely could fail of it. Receive, Sir, the warmest assurances of my attachment, my zeal, and my respect.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME, OF THE FIRST PART.

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